

FRENCH OPPOSITION TO THE MEXICAN POLICY OF THE SECOND EMPIRE

BY
FRANK EDWARD LALLY

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Board of University Studies of the Johns
Hopkins University in Conformity with the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

1930

Gen. 49 No 3

BALTIMORE

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COMPOSED AND PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.
BY THE
J. H. FURST CO., BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

PREFACE

A very great deal has been said on the French invasion of Mexico in the "sixties." That subject, in fact, has been so deeply investigated that we now know from Lehautcourt not merely its exact waste of life and treasure but even the number of shells and bullets carried in the munition wagons of the French expedition. But sparingly little has been written on the vigorous French opposition to that chimeric exploit. Even Taxile Delord, and La Gorce, the most voluminous and authoritative writers on the Second Empire, and Corti, too, the latest, and one of the most searching students of Maximilian's Empire, touch upon the opposition in France only incidentally. That opposition, however, is worthy of a more full and distinct treatment and to give this is the larger purpose of the following chapters.

The first of these, seemingly a rather far-fetched preamble, will prove its usefulness, I think, in those forming the narrative proper, which covers the period between the Convention of La Soledad (February 19, 1862) and the French General Election of 1869, after which the "Question of Mexico," the subject of nine years' debate, was finally laid at rest. It has been my task to combine the particulars of that debate which are scattered in the many sources indicated in my discussion; and if I have executed it in any way suitable to the importance of the subject my efforts will have been of some use to American history which has long emphasized merely the humiliation her expedition brought France.

Such, briefly, is the purpose, scope, and possible usefulness of this dissertation which I have written under the direction of Professor John H. Latané. I owe much to him and to the late Dr. E. R. Turner in the way of encouragement and guidance.

F. E. L.



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FRENCH OPPOSITION TO THE MEXICAN POLICY OF THE SECOND EMPIRE

CHAPTER I

OUTLINE OF FRANCO-MEXICAN CONTACTS AND RELATIONS, 1689-1862

In late December, 1684, three French vessels entered the Gulf of Mexico, "that forbidden sea, whence, by a Spanish decree, dating from the reign of Philip II, all foreigners were excluded on the pain of extermination." Holding a north-westerly course, and cautiously ploughing its perilous waters, they approached and skirted the western shores of the Gulf, and, at length, in the second week of February, 1685, two of them cast anchor in a broad and sheltered harbor, and deposited on the lonely shore their cargo of 120 souls.

On the object of that landing,¹ whose story Parkman has immortalized, it is sufficient to say that it was to set up a base whence France might spread her dominion to the Pacific, or, at least, by means of her Indian allies, plunder the riches of New Spain. And on its issue, it is enough to recall the following picture of the Bay St. Louis as seen by a party of Spaniards in 1689, four years after the French landing. Parkman says:

Guided by a French prisoner, probably one of the deserters from La Salle, they pushed their way across wild and arid plains, rivers, prairies, and forests, till at length they approached the Bay St. Louis, and descried, far off, the harboring place of the French. As they drew near, no banner was displayed, no sentry challenged; and the silence of death reigned over the shattered palisades and neglected dwellings. The Spaniards spurred their reluctant horses through the gateway, and a scene of desolation met their sight. No living thing

¹ As to its inspiration, a profound student and voluminous writer on Mexican history is inclined to the belief that it was the dream of a disgruntled Spaniard, Don Diego de Peñalosa, whose memorials to the French government are still extant, and whose acquaintanceship with La Salle is an established fact. (Hubert H. Bancroft, *History of the North Mexican States and Texas*, I, 392-394.)

was stirring. Doors were torn from their hinges; broken boxes, staved barrels, and rusty kettles, mingled with a great number of stocks of arquebuses and muskets were scattered about in confusion—on the adjacent prairie lay three dead bodies, one of which, from the fragments of a dress still clinging to the wasted remains, they saw to be that of a woman. It was vain to question the imperturbable savages, who, wrapped to the throat in their buffalo robes, stood gazing on the scene with looks of wooden immobility.²

Such was the tragic issue of the first contact of France with Mexico.³

That tragedy extinguished the plan of Louis XIV to carry on a French and Indian war against New Spain, and directed him instead to the more profitable activity of colonizing the latest annex to his empire, which the founder of ill-fated Bay St. Louis had given to and named for him.

France's settlement of the lower reaches of that vast domain was a matter of immense concern to the Mexican viceroy, whose navy, in 1699, had tried and failed to nip the settlement in the bud. D'Iberville's successful foundation that year expanded rapidly, and in less than a decade brought France again into physical contact with eastern Texas, which the viceroy established as a buffer state against the threatening encroachment of the Louisiana colony. That barrier which was missionary⁴ in form and political in purpose stopped the French from expanding too far westward, but it was made, nevertheless, to serve the interests of these, who were traders as well as soldiers. The establishment of the Texan missionary bulwark, in effect, simply brought the Mexican market closer to the Louisiana colony which began its exploitation as early as 1714.

The source of this commercial penetration and threat on

² Francis Parkman, *La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West*, pp. 442-443.

³ Discussing, in this chapter, only political contacts, I ignore the fact that Frenchmen resided in Mexico City already in 1689, and practised there several of the mechanic arts. So little did their residence constitute a political danger that they remained unmolested during the Franco-Spanish war of that year. (Bancroft, *History of Mexico*, III, 223.)

⁴ The barrier was under the direction of the Franciscans in whose missions, a recent student of the question, following Herbert E. Bolton, discovers the beginning of Texas history. (Thomas P. O'Rourke, *The Franciscans in Texas (1690-1793)*, p. 93.)

Spanish power was the French post of Natchitoches on the Red River, a place that in time of war between France and Spain became a terrible engine against the viceroyalty. The trail that contraband caravans were wont to follow was then suddenly changed into a channel of invasion, and the missions, whose padres and Indians had purchased from the French, were plundered and devastated by these and their Indian allies. We have normal illustrations of these two types of Louisiana invasion in the expeditions of Juchereau de St. Denis, in 1714 and 1719. Military invasion, however, was comparatively rare, and it left no sore spots; for regularly on the restoration of peace, the French would retire to Louisiana, never making an attempt to retain any territory beyond the Red River.⁵

Bancroft finds himself perplexed by this fact, and tries to explain it by inferring that the contraband trade of Mexicans was preferred by the French to their soil; and this is a reasonable inference; for all settlers in Louisiana, as has already been observed, were traders, and above everything traders. The very military officers there, it appears, were smugglers first and soldiers afterwards, and were, in fact, such severe competitors in the smuggling business between the colony and Texas and Vera Cruz that the famous Crozat Company, a regular and authorized monopoly, could not meet their competition and failed utterly. A certain proof of this absorbing peace-time occupation of Louisianans is the fact that the money in circulation in the colony was largely Spanish.⁶

But notwithstanding their greater bent toward trade, the French colonists made a slight territorial encroachment in 1735, when they transferred the Natchitoches post from the east to the west bank of the Red River. I may not enter into the details of the dispute that arose in consequence of this sudden expansion. It is sufficient to say that the vicerojal

⁵ Bancroft asks his reader to keep such facts in mind "when, at a later date, on the acquisition of Louisiana by the United States, he finds that government unjustly laying claim to Texas and assuming a right of possession to the Rio Grande." (Bancroft, *History of the North Mexican States and Texas*, I, 629.)

⁶ Parkman, *A Half Century of Conflict*, I, 306.

government at first protested against the transfer on the ground that the river formed the true boundary between Texas and Louisiana, and that the protest being unheeded by the French, the viceroy took no hostile action, but limited himself to forbidding all intercourse between Texas and Natchitoches. This prohibition, of course, was a rather severe reprisal against the traders. But it was never enforced. The Texans, governors, friars and others, showed themselves as indifferent to the prohibition as they were to the boundary question; and down to the settlement of that question, in 1762, by France's transfer to Spain of trans-Mississippi Louisiana, they devoted themselves, year in and year out, to contraband trade, the chief occupation of the Franco-Mexican frontier.

With the Transfer of 1762, the second contact between France and Mexico, which had endured for more than half a century, came to an end. The severance was perhaps quite as abrupt as that of 1689. But it was not tragical; and the period of this contact was on the whole one of relative good will. Relations between the French and the Mexicans during the greater number of years were peaceful and mutually beneficial. The conniving spirit and the contraband habits of Mexican officials, and the resolution of Spain to avoid a quarrel over the boundary question contributed immeasurably to this happy situation. But another contributing factor that must not be disregarded is that few French immigrated into Mexico during this period to give occasion to intervention for "the pursuit of just griefs" from which Mexico later was so often to suffer.

Before 1750, in fact, very few Frenchmen settled in Mexico, and these were, generally, agents for the fur companies. The above mentioned Transfer, doubtless, added a few others to that scant group, and, on the eve, and on the morrow of the American Revolution others immigrated into Mexico to add to the French population there. The number of French in Mexico, however, at the close of the 18th century remained

small,⁷ but not negligible; for they were persecuted by the viceroy when the French Revolution brought about war between France and Spain.

The immediate consequences of that war did not affect Mexico. But one of its remote effects, the Treaty of Subsidies, 1803, made her a victim of Napoleon, and brought her into unwilling political contact with France. In meeting the obligations of that Treaty, Spain virtually commissioned her 56th Mexican viceroy⁸ a fiscal agent of Napoleon, and allowed French warships to enter the port of Vera Cruz to transport to Europe the gold and silver extorted for the peace of Spain. Mexicans vehemently but vainly protested against the vice-royal exactions, and millions were shipped across the Atlantic before the collections stopped with the invasion of the Peninsula in 1808. By that time the very term French was odious to Mexicans; and it was undoubtedly extremely satisfying to them to be given the opportunity of rejecting and expelling the envoys of the French intruder of the Spanish throne who demanded their allegiance.⁹ King Joseph's sword was too short to compel that allegiance, and he did not insist. But he did not wholly abandon Mexico.

Discontent there was deep and widespread. The mother country had never dealt justly with the colony. Injustice had grown with the years, and in the last decade of the 18th century, Mexico's position had become so intolerable to some that the spirit of revolt, for a brief moment, asserted itself. The great mass of the people and the majority of their leaders, however, were forbearing and resisted all temptation to cast off the yoke by violence. A mystical love for the ancient throne explains their long suffering. But now that throne had fallen, there were those who said that the bond that held

⁷ The middle of the following century did not find the number of French residents in Mexico very large. (A. Malespine, *La Solution de la Question Mexicaine*, p. 26, sets the number at 2,048 in 1858.)

⁸ José de Iturrigaray, who reached Mexico in January, 1803. He began his collections without delay, delivering twenty-four million francs to Napoleon in May, 1806. (Bancroft, *History of Mexico*, IV, 30.)

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

Mexico to Spain was thereby broken, and that Mexico's destiny was henceforth her own. A most acceptable doctrine to King Joseph and his brother, and if translated into action it would offer fair compensation for the refused allegiance. Its promulgators were courageous enough but painfully lacking in revolutionary technique, and as the Bonapartes were more than well prepared to supply this need they promptly offered the rebels their help asking in return only the friendship and commerce of a liberated Mexico.¹⁰ The plotters were amenable and, in 1809, the operations of Joseph's latest emissaries were such as to cause the Viceroy Garibay to forbid all Frenchmen from landing in Mexico.¹¹ But the agitators still effected entry, and guided the novices to the Revolution of 1810.¹² The leader of that Revolt, the padre Hidalgo, was in personal contact with the French agents whom the viceroy, in his appeal for loyalty to the Spanish Junta, charged with being the true cause of the Revolution.¹³

After the execution of Hidalgo, in 1811, the activities of the French agents ceased, and the revolutionists, left to their own resources, carried on, for the next decade, a losing fight with the friends of the old order, who by 1822 had succeeded in confining the Revolution to a small section of southern Mexico. A few months more, and this flicker extinguished, all Mexico would be again under the yoke of Spain. Such was the optimistic issue looked for by the reactionaries. The treason and ambition, however, of one of their own generals, Augustine Iturbide, not only defeated that hope but enabled the revolutionaries, in 1823, to rise from defeat, and end forever Spain's dominion over Mexico. Their success was in large measure the result of the unifying effect of the famous

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 71, footnote.

¹² For information on methods employed by the Bonapartes in such matters, see Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte with His Brother Joseph, II, 360-361.

¹³ D'Alvimar, a French agent, while passing through Dolores, Hidalgo's parish, had several interviews with the latter encouraging him in revolutionary designs. "Hidalgo, however," says Bancroft, "at his trial asserted that his conversations with D'Alvimar had no political importance." (*History of Mexico*, IV, 70-71, footnotes.)

Plan De Iguala. This Plan, Iturbide's personal contribution to the Revolution, might have made Mexico a constitutional monarchy, the only form of government her political experience made it wise for her to assume. But Iturbide, as faithless to his Plan as he was to his junta oath, brought about new disorder and deflected Mexico from her proper political course into the half century of chaos, which her historians have been pleased to call a Republic. Notwithstanding all that may be said in its favor, the republican Constitution of 1824 was undeniably premature.

While these things were taking place, France, too, was severely transformed. The Empire that had at first victimized Mexico, and later demanded her adhesion, and still later urged her to rebel, had been ground to powder, and the Bourbons, bone, flesh and blood, one with Mexico's old rulers, were restored to the throne of France.

In 1823, this Bourbon House intervened in Spain in behalf of its weaker cousin. But hardly was its work there finished when its attention was drawn to Mexico; not, however, in the interests of Spain. Iturbide had not yet betrayed his colleagues, and the throne of Mexico was still open to European bidders, as provided for by the Plan of Iguala. The French Minister, Chateaubriand, knowing that its acceptance by Spaniards was improbable, sought it for French royalty, despatching secret agents to Mexico to study her political situation and make soundings as to the chances of French Bourbons for the new throne. If there were none, the emissaries were to give their visit a real value by arranging for a treaty of commerce. This, indeed, was imperative; as England had already informed France of her intention to recognize the new American states. Chateaubriand's agents, however, effected nothing, for they were arrested at Vera Cruz on their arrival and deported.¹⁴

The Republic established in 1824 welcomed the trade of the world, and French and other merchants rushed into Mexico.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ibid., V, 52-53.

¹⁵ J. C. Beltrami, *Le Mexique*, tome i, pp. 68-69. But he thought that many of the invaders were "ces hommes que le J suitisme

The foremost competitors of the French were the English who, in addition to the advantages their advanced industrial revolution gave them over all rivals, enjoyed all the helps of treaty protection. The intimate connection between the French and Spanish Houses prohibited France's recognition of Mexican independence, without which no treaty of commerce with Mexico was possible. But French trade needed protection, and for better or worse, it must be obtained. This was the will of France on the matter, at least, in 1826.

That year, the admiral commanding the French forces in the West Indies was ordered to appoint a provisional commercial agent to Mexico.¹⁶ The Republic, however, refused to receive the appointee, and its Congress, on May 4th, decreed that no communications whatever would be entertained with any Power which did not recognize the independence of Mexico.¹⁷ This attitude forced France to take a half step in the right direction, the following year, when she invited the Mexican Minister to England to enter into an agreement to which she would not give the name of treaty and called it a provisional agreement to regulate the chief points of trade. By this, every tradesman and every shipmaster, as well as every other national of either country was to be entirely free to carry on by himself his trade or business in either country or to confide the management of the same to whomsoever he wished. Nationals, too, in either country were to be entirely free in all their purchases, as in all their sales, to set the prices they judged proper for all merchandise and all objects whatever, those imported as well as those destined for exportation; and, more important still was the provision that nationals in either country were to submit to its laws and statutes, and were to be bound to pay only such taxes and imposts, and to make only such requisitions as were required from the natives. The Convention concluded providing for the appointment of a French commissioner to Mexico, who was to advise his Gov-

dépêche dans les *Ameriques* sous le nom d'agens commerciaux." (Ibid., p. 68.)

¹⁶ Bancroft, *History of Mexico*, V, 52.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 53.

ernment on the affairs of the Republic, the state of which would guide it toward final recognition.¹⁸

A political revolt in Mexico in 1828, the first in that long chain of discord that extends into the "fifties,"¹⁹ prevented the ratification of this Convention. During this revolt French merchants in Mexico City suffered losses, but they could not have been very heavy, for the storm passed over quickly, and, in 1829, negotiations between France and Mexico were resumed. This time the Mexicans took the initiative, instructing their London Minister to seek a treaty with France. As a result of his efforts a provisional treaty of amity and commerce was drawn up between France and Mexico, assuring the subjects of each nation the same rights and privileges granted by each to the most favored nation.

France, however, refused the alternate priority in the preamble of the two drafts of this Convention, and as a result of this refusal to recognize Mexico's equality with other free nations, the Mexican congress refused to ratify the Convention.²⁰ The government of Charles X was attempting to patch up this new difficulty, when the July Revolution abruptly ended its existence, and transferred the Mexican problem to Louis Philippe for solution.

Between 1830 and 1837, four major revolutions took place in Mexico. In all of these French merchants suffered ever-increasing losses, and appeal after appeal was sent France for redress. In response, the July Monarchy lodged a series of claims with Mexico in their behalf, but without avail; for it

¹⁸ P. Blanchard et A. Dauzats, *San Juan de Ulúa ou Relation de l'Expédition Française au Mexique*, pp. 281-282.

¹⁹ "Between 1821 and 1857 the country had more than half a dozen forms of government, under imperial and republican regencies, empire and federal, central and dictatorial rules, of varying shades, and over 50 different administrations, for which fully 250 revolutions were undertaken . . . Some like Domenesch . . . count 240 between 1821-67; but others swell the figure far beyond by close, but not very arbitrary, reckoning." (Bancroft, *History of Mexico*, VI, 468.)

²⁰ *Ibid.*, V, 53. France nevertheless sent an agent who apparently remained in the country despite the refused recognition. (See E. Domenesch, *Histoire du Mexique*, tome ii, p. 75.) Mexico, too, had an unofficial representative, a Señor Garro, who quitted France, September 25, 1838. (*History of Mexico*, V, 188.)

was not more successful in concluding the essential treaty than its predecessor. Mexico's insistence on full and proper recognition of her independence and France's persistent evasion in this matter led eventually to war.

Louis Philippe had resolved on that violent manner of settlement almost from the year he ascended the throne. If he hesitated and temporized, it was because of obstructions to such action surrounding him on the Continent. Mexico was doubtless in his mind in 1832 when he said: "It is necessary to weigh interests, and measure distances far from us, . . . round about us, at our gates, we are engaged beforehand."²¹ And that year, his action with regard to Portugal almost exactly forecasted what fate awaited Mexico when he was free to deal with her.

The exactions of Dom Miguel upon a few Frenchmen domiciled in his kingdom had given rise to some grievances that had long remained unredressed. Some attempts had been made at a peaceful solution of the Portuguese difficulty, but in 1832 diplomacy was abruptly abandoned, and a French squadron sailing up the Tagus, captured the Portuguese fleet, and successfully demanded an indemnity, which was paid by a convention signed aboard its flagship.²²

Among other matters that riveted the attention of France to the Continent, in that and immediately succeeding years, were the following: her need to watch Holland after the separation of Belgium (1832); the existence of a strong revolutionary spirit in Lyons and Paris (1831-36); the Spanish Revolution which caused her to mass troops along the southwestern frontier (1836); and, finally, the fickleness observed in the army, of which the ridiculous Strasbourg affair gave certain evidence.²³ None of her troops could well be spared for distant expeditions while dangers such as these threatened. The stay-in-Europe policy continued in force, therefore, until they were dissipated.

²¹ M. Guizot, *History of France*, VIII, 362.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 362.

²³ Of these four checks to foreign enterprise that of insurrection was doubtless the strongest, and Guizot, who lived in the midst of the scenes he describes, leaves this impression. *Ibid.*, ch. lxxx.

In 1837 the general European situation, if not altogether satisfactory, was somewhat ameliorated; and Louis Philippe's liberal action that year, in restoring to freedom four imprisoned Ministers of Charles X, effected a marked change for the better in the domestic situation. Peace, therefore, at last effected in France, and Europe offering no serious impediment to foreign enterprise, the Royal government appointed the year 1838 for the reckoning with Mexico.

Baron Deffaudis, the French agent in Mexico City, was evidently well acquainted with this resolve of his government, for he abruptly dropped all communication with the Mexican government and quitted its capital in January, 1838.²⁴ As he was about to leave Vera Cruz a French warship entered the harbor bearing a note confirming his action and instructing him to have all French nationals in Mexico list their effects;²⁵ and Mexicans were to learn shortly that this instruction was not an idle gesture.

In early March, a French squadron anchored at Vera Cruz, and Deffaudis, who was aboard the flagship, immediately issued an ultimatum to the Mexican government. After reviewing the causes for the complaints of France, which included a long list of outrages and assassinations that dated back to the Mexican revolution of 1828, and emphasizing the "persistent evasion" of the Mexican government with respect to indemnities, the ultimatum demanded, in settlement of all French claims, the payment of 600,000 piastres to the French fleet at Vera Cruz not later than May 15. It further demanded the immediate release of all French nationals, imprisoned for the refusal to submit to forced loans, and the removal from office of certain named Mexican officials concerned in outrages against Frenchmen, and, lastly, that a treaty be drawn up according French nationals rights similar to those enjoyed in Mexico by the subjects of the most favored nation. An answer was expected by April 15 at the latest; and if, on that date, no satisfactory reply was received, Def-

²⁴ Bancroft, *History of Mexico*, V, 187.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, footnotes.

faudis threatened to hand over affairs to the naval commander, Admiral Bazoche, authorizing him to make whatever reprisals he judged proper on the sources of the maritime revenue.²⁶

The Mexican government replied to this note four days after its transmission. Its answer was dignified: The honor of Mexico forbade a favorable consideration of the French claims while a French squadron was in Mexican waters.²⁷ The government, therefore, urged the immediate withdrawal of that squadron. This curt reply was declared evasive, and one more satisfactory was requested. Mexico had no other answer; and no further communication passed between the fleet and Mexico City until April 16, when Bazoche announced the suspension of diplomatic relations. He took no belligerent steps, however, until the 23d, when he proclaimed the ports of Mexico to be in a state of blockade.

These events seemed to make little impression on the Mexican government, which after strengthening the defences of Vera Cruz and despatching to that port some regiments from the interior, took no further action. Apparently believing itself secure behind the fortifications of America's Gibraltar, it idly awaited answer to its hopes; namely, the destruction of the invaders by the northers and fevers that swept the coast each summer and fall. The classic on the Expedition of 1838 "San Juan de Ulúa" tells us how fearfully close the Mexicans came to the realization of their hopes. Yellow fever and scurvy had reduced the French crews to a little more than half their number by the fall, when, as if to destroy those whom disease had spared, hurricanes swept down upon the blockading squadron, threatening time and time again to strew the coast with its wreckage. But disease and storm

²⁶ Substance of "Ultimatum présenté au gouvernement mexicain à bord de la frégate S. M. l'Herminie, 21 mars 1838." This is given in full in Blanchard et Dauzats, pp. 229-250. It is on this richly documented and interesting work of two participants of the so-called "Pastry War" that Bancroft and others treating of it chiefly depend. In spite of the two names to which "San Juan" is accredited, Blanchard alone was the author.

²⁷ Bancroft, *History of Mexico*, V, 188; Blanchard et Dauzats seem shocked by the extreme brevity of the Mexican reply, which indeed they count as no answer to the French note whose transcription occupies a score of their pages. (San Juan de Ulúa, p. 251.)

could not break the spirit of the French, and their skeleton crews maintained the blockade until relieved by a fresh squadron in October.

The new blockade commander, Admiral Baudin,²⁸ came armed with full diplomatic powers as well as with cannon, and he was resolved to finish the Mexican business one way or another before another summer came to destroy his crews. His first act, on casting anchor, was to send a note to Mexico City. This stated that French nationals were in Mexico because of their faith in the Declarations of 1827 which were the basis of relations between France and Mexico. Those Declarations, Baudin observed, stipulated the advantages the citizens of either country were mutually to enjoy, and which, as they had never been annulled, formed a contract that bound both countries. Mexico, he continued, had gravely violated that contract, time after time, and most flagrantly, by forced loans, which were explicitly interdicted by the Declarations of 1827. It was idle, he added, for Mexico to try to escape the consequences of such acts by asserting that no formal treaty existed, embodying the assurances of 1827, for such a treaty had been made in 1828 and had the signatures of the plenipotentiaries of both nations. And France had ratified that treaty. What if the Mexican Congress had not? Mexico's failure to do so was assuredly no fault of France. Indeed, the admiral concluded, the inaction of Mexico in this important matter had but one significance; it pointed out unmistakably which of the two countries blocked the path to more amicable relations. And at all events the failure of the Mexican Government to ratify the treaty in no way revoked or abrogated the provisional agreement it embodied.²⁹

The French bearer of this message was cordially received at Mexico City, and, as there was much in it inviting discussion, it led to a conference which took place at Jalapa, November 17, between Baudin and Cuevas, the Mexican Minister of

²⁸ Blanchard et Dauzats give no reason for Bazoche's recall to France, but he was probably ordered back as a matter of course with Deffaudis, the real head of the expedition, whom Baudin replaced.

²⁹ The Baudin Note, thus summarized, occupies nine pages of Blanchard et Dauzats, pp. 251-259.

Foreign Affairs.³⁰ Everything went on well until Baudin brought up the matter of the Deffaudis ultimatum. The admiral's attitude in regard to this was unyielding. He not only refused to lighten the burden it imposed on Mexico, but made it still more onerous by raising the 600,000 piastres to 800,000 to cover the costs of the blockade. Cuevas refused to consider this new demand. Mexico was willing to pay the original sum but would make no other concession. She must, he said, determine for herself the punishment to be given officials named for dismissal by France. She could allow no interference in a matter so purely internal; and, as for the French complaints regarding forced loans, such charges were groundless as Mexico had long since put an end to such loans. Cuevas closed his remarks with a reference to the French blockade which he said made Mexico also a claimant nation, the rights of which she exercised by demanding the immediate release of all blockade sequestrations. Baudin, in reply, merely repeated the French demands, and Cuevas met the blunt repetition by recommending that the dispute be referred to the arbitration of England. The greatest enemy of French commerce thus recommended! No idea was better calculated to arouse the anger of Baudin, who quit the conference forthwith, threatening that, if all demands were not agreed to by noon, November 27, he would commence hostilities.³¹

On reaching Vera Cruz he ordered the 22 vessels of his fleet to prepare for action. A Mexican note reached him on the 24th asking for further negotiations during which the ships were to withdraw.³² This request was ignored,³³ and at half-past two, the afternoon of the 27th, the French fleet opened fire. The bombardment lasted until sunset, when San Juan de Ulloa lay a smoking ruin. Vera Cruz fell the next day after

³⁰ Bustamente, President of Mexico at the time, granted the conference.

³¹ Blanchard et Dauzats, pp. 266-283.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 301.

³³ More accurately, it was refused, for Baudin deigned to reply, but his reply amounted to a refusal. "The mission of peace," he said, "is terminated. That of war is about to begin." (*Ibid.*, p. 305.)

a wretched resistance. The progress of the French, however, outside the city was slow, and it was not until January, 1839, that they succeeded in crushing Santa Anna, whose badly beaten remnants retreated to the capital.

England, who looked upon the war as one in disguise on herself, felt the blockade keenly, and after the Mexicans abandoned the coast she took steps to end the conflict. In February, therefore, her minister, Pakenham, offered the beligerents his services as mediator.³⁴ Mexico, her hands more than full with the Texan war of secession then in progress, gladly accepted the offer. Baudin undoubtedly would have scorned it were not spring with its yellow fever at hand. But one conflict with that scourge was more than enough, and he, too, accepted the services of Pakenham, who immediately arranged for a conference, which took place in March, when a treaty was drawn up establishing "perpetual" peace between France and Mexico. By the principal clauses of this, Mexico agreed to pay France 600,000 piastres in settlement of all claims, and also granted her most-favored-nation privileges; and both nations agreed to refer all disputed points to the arbitration of a third Power. The treaty was ratified by Mexico, March 21 and by France, July 6; and, by the latter's appointment at the same time of a minister to Mexico, regular relations between the two countries were inaugurated at last.³⁵

The tardiness of France in effecting this amity gives her the unenviable distinction of being the last great Power to recognize the independence of Mexico. Even Spain preceded her in rendering Mexico that honor.³⁶ And along with that distinction another equally unenviable must be recorded. The

³⁴ Bancroft, *History of Mexico*, V, 202-203.

³⁵ Blanchard et Dauzats' *San Juan* is full on these negotiations, giving generous extracts of the French, English and Mexican notes as well as a good summary of the peace conferences.

³⁶ Spain formally recognized the independence of Mexico in a treaty concluded at Madrid between the minister of foreign affairs, Calatrava, and the Mexican plenipotentiary, Santa Maria, on the 28th of December, 1836. The treaty, ratified by Mexico, May 3, 1837, was one not only of recognition of Mexico as an independent nation, but also of amity, commerce and navigation, on the basis of the most favored nations. (Bancroft, *History of Mexico*, V, 181.)

invasion just related in outline brought the Republic of Mexico its first foreign war.

The results of that war for the French, on the credit side, were certainly of some value; for the War of 1838-39 was successful as far as wars can be successful. But if we turn to the debit column, some heavy losses must be observed. First of all, 200,000 piastres must be put down as unpaid costs of the expedition. On this side of the ledger, likewise, must be noted the influence England gained over her rival by her mediation; and last of all must be noted the bitterness of Mexico toward a nation that had emboldened Texan secession. The Texan rebels had little to fear from a government embroiled with a great Power. In 1836 and 1837 their independence was constantly threatened, but in 1838 while Baudin's fleet swept the Gulf it was practically assured.³⁷ This indirect support of the rebels was most certain to be remembered and resented by Mexico.

But the feelings of Mexicans were evidently little regarded in those days, for we see the French fleet, less than two months after the peace, anchored in Texan waters, and Admiral Baudin paying a visit to President Lamar at Houston,³⁸ a visit followed four months later by France's unconditional recognition of Texan independence.³⁹ Mexico could not ignore these unfriendly acts, and her Minister of Foreign Affairs, in registering her protest, in January, 1840, took occasion to remind France of her long delay in recognizing Mexico's independence from Spain, observing that no such slackness was witnessed in her recent recognition of Texas, an

³⁷ "Les Texiens" say Blanchard et Dauzats, "se montrent très-reconnaissants envers la France, de cette guerre qui a été si favorable à leurs intérêts quoique non entreprise à leur intention." (San Juan, p. 526.)

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 525.

³⁹ In 1838 the British government made a commercial treaty with Texas, under the reservation, however, that until Mexico formally recognized Texas, it would consider the latter as a part of Mexico. In November of the same year, a similar treaty was made between Texas and France, but without the reservation; and in September, 1839, the treaty was ratified, and the independence of Texas acknowledged by the French government. (Bancroft, *North Mexican States and Texas*, II, 338-339.)

act which implied that the existing ties of friendship were as nought.⁴⁰ The protest was ignored, and the act itself regarded as an expression of the soundest foreign policy. France, indeed, did not think her troubles with Mexicans were forever ended; and her recognition of Texas was founded on the hope that Texan friendship would render more easy her future action in Mexico. Henceforth when she had need to demand satisfaction for new griefs there, it was her purpose to take Texans into her pay and by these auxiliaries who dwelt at the very gates of Mexico punish offending Mexican Governments without the enormous costs and inconveniences entailed by the transportation of an army across more than three thousand miles of sea.⁴¹ It was not the destiny of Texans, however, to become hirelings, and when French merchants again suffered in Mexico an ocean still lay between them and relief.

From 1842 to 1853 Mexico experienced six great revolutions, another foreign war, and pronunciamientos too numerous to count. Out of all this turmoil arose a new batch of French claims which remained unheeded until 1853 when France, now an Empire and well able to act beyond her borders, forced Mexico into a new treaty. By a convention in 1853, Mexico agreed to meet all French claims by setting aside certain sums at her customs-houses. Theft of these moneys by warring factions, however, prevented the execution of this treaty, but France was too occupied with affairs on the Continent to take any further action with regard to Mexico until 1858.

In the meantime the important Revolution of 1856 occurred, and placed the Liberal faction in the saddle. The object of the new government was to make Mexico a strong federal state. That, at least, was the spirit of the Constitution adopted in 1857, which instrument, however, failed to bring Mexico peace, which she most needed. On the contrary, its radical land ⁴² and fiscal clauses threw the country back into

⁴⁰ Bancroft, *History of Mexico*, V, 327-328, footnotes.

⁴¹ Blanchard et Dauzats, p. 525.

⁴² By virtue of the "*ley de desamortizacion civil y eclesiastica*" (June, 1856), popularly called the "*ley Lerdo*" in honor of its

disorder, and, in January, 1858, reaction and liberalism were fighting anew for mastery. During this conflict, which lasted until December, 1860, Mexico had two governments, one at Mexico City, where the foes of the new Constitution held sway and elected two presidents (Zuloaga,⁴³ 1858, and Miramon, 1858-60), and the other at Vera Cruz, where the constitutionalists ruled under the presidency of Benito Juarez.

The attitude of France towards Mexico at this time is interesting. In 1858, a French squadron appeared at Vera Cruz to collect overdue port dividends, and push new claims;⁴⁴ and there were doubtless many of these, for the French population in Mexico was now above two thousand. France had not yet recognized the Liberals, but the French admiral did not hesitate to treat with Juarez for a new convention after the latter had collected funds to meet his demands. And while this convention was being effected with the Liberal Government at Vera Cruz, the French Minister, Gabriac, was doing business with the reactionaries at Mexico City.⁴⁵ The day was fast approaching, however, when this two-faced policy would be no longer possible. After the election of Miramon, the tide gradually turned in favor of the Liberals, and reaction, steadily losing ground throughout the year, was finally swept from power in December, 1860, when its forlorn leader sought safety aboard a French warship.

It would be false to say that French policy at this time was altogether two-faced, and wholly unfair to Mexico; for once, while the issue of the civil conflict was still somewhat doubtful, France manifested sincere good will toward Mexico.

framer, Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, Secretary of the Treasury, "The law authorized tenants to become owners of the estates they held in lease from civil or ecclesiastical corporations; the same authorization was given to those holding mortmain property in emphyteusis, capitalizing at six per centum a year the rent they were paying to arrive at the value of the property, which was secured at six per centum in favor of the corporation formerly owning it, and made redeemable at the purchaser's convenience." (Bancroft, *History of Mexico*, V, 693, footnote.)

⁴³ Resigned December 23, as result of trouble in the reactionary camp.

⁴⁴ Bancroft, *History of Mexico*, V, 749-750.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 749.

This was in the autumn of 1860, when she joined England and Spain in asking the warring factions to hold an armistice under the joint supervision of the three Powers so that a general assembly might determine which of the Governments and presidents the people of Mexico wished. Miramon, seeing his power dwindling, was agreeable,⁴⁶ but Juarez, asserting that the Constitution of 1857 well expressed the people's will, was inexorable.⁴⁷ The Powers then threatened intervention, but wisely abstained from an action which the success of Juarez made unnecessary.

France recognized the Liberals soon after Miramon's fall, but her Minister, the Baron Saligny⁴⁸ was tardily welcomed by Mexico, whose population was openly hostile to France, in consequence of the long period of unhappy relations between the two countries. Nor did the new Minister's appointment much mend matters. It was, indeed, an unfortunate one, if France seriously wished to dissipate the hostility her Mexican policy had engendered. Saligny was wholly unfitted for such a task. His character is said to have been totally wanting in forbearance and conciliation; and, in fact, it is questionable whether he even cared to mitigate Mexican animosity towards his country.⁴⁹

Saligny's chief business in Mexico, one is tempted to believe, was to pave the way for foreign intervention; and if such were his objective, he never was given a better opportunity to prosecute it than in July, 1861, when the Mexican Congress passed a law suspending for two years all payments, including the amounts assigned to meet the claims conventions. This law was passed on the 17th of that month, almost unanimously, and Saligny, always on the watch for trouble, was the first to protest against it.⁵⁰ He was followed by the English

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, V, 777.

⁴⁷ Juarez issued a declaration against compromise in any form. *Ibid.*, p. 778.

⁴⁸ Saligny's first instructions had been to recognize Miramon's government, and even if this were unknown he could not have been welcome to Mexico as he had been the first French Minister to the hated Texan Republic. (*Ibid.*, pp. 789, 327.)

⁴⁹ Bancroft considers him a political trickster. (*Ibid.*, V, 327.)

⁵⁰ He protested against the law not only for France but also for

Minister, Wyke, whose objections were not so vehement as Saligny's.

The law was very ill-advised. Even Juarez recognized this, and did everything possible to prevent its enactment. Fearing that suspension of claims payments would bring about the threatened intervention, he took it upon himself to arrange for a new convention, which would settle all the questions at issue, and in November, Zamacoma, his Minister of Foreign Affairs, drew up a treaty to which the English Minister gave his assent. But not so Baron Saligny. Resolute in his determination completely to sever relations, he straightway quit the country;⁵¹ and the Mexican Congress, unfortunately showing itself as obstinate as the French Minister, rejected the Juarez convention, and by this action compelled Wyke to follow Saligny's path.

Diplomatic relations with England and France now finally ruptured, intervention was inevitable. Spain soon joined the protesting Powers, and the three, apparently having expected the worst, were well prepared to carry out their threat of the previous year;⁵² for they had agreed at London, October 31, jointly to intervene in Mexico to force reparations for injuries and damages suffered by their nationals, and compel the fulfillment of all obligations contracted between Mexico and themselves. The outcome of this Convention was the well-known tripartite expedition inaugurated December 14, 1861, by the entry of a Spanish squadron into the harbor of Vera Cruz, and its capture of that port on the 17th. The English forces reached Mexico the 6th of January, 1862, and the

Spain, and this without special authorization. The Spanish government later approved his protest. (Ibid., VI, p. 18, footnote.)

⁵¹ Diplomatic relations with France had already been partially severed in consequence of an attack on Saligny's life, and all efforts to win his assent to this new convention were without avail. He was bent on maintaining the interruption of diplomatic relations and quitting the country.

⁵² Plans for joint intervention were fairly under way in July, 1860, but probably because the United States was still quite free to display an active interest in Mexican affairs (seven or eight American war-ships patrolled the Mexican coast in 1860) the plans remained merely plans.

French, who were destined to remain in Mexico a very much longer time than their allies, arrived the next day.

The threatened joint intervention thus came at last. But it ended almost as suddenly as it came. Hardly had the Allies begun to carry out their plans when a dissension arose over certain acts of the French, who, quickly abandoned by the English and Spanish, were left to fight the war themselves.

That war, portions of whose oft-told story I shall, hereafter, have occasion to recall, proved a tragic climax to the unhappy relations that began with the 19th century, in the first years of which the name of France, intimately connected with tribute, was execrated by all Mexicans; and in the second decade of which, that name, bound up with revolutionary intrigue, was despised by multitudes who had not yet broken with Old Spain. A very bad state of affairs indeed; and bad became worse as the century rolled on. We need no other proof of this than that France was the last of the Powers duly to recognize Mexico's hard-won freedom. Nor was this her most grievous injury in the eyes of Mexicans. During the long struggle with chaos, from 1828 to 1856, France showed not only little sympathy with the young Republic but like the hated expansionists of the North, added the sufferings and misery of foreign invasion to Mexico's burden of civil strife. And now, finally, in the middle years of the century, when Mexico, victorious over herself, seemed about to enjoy a more perfect measure of liberty, as Bancroft well observes, France alone attempted to rob her of her heritage.

But in those dark days of the "sixties" when French armies labored at her destruction, the Republic learned for the first time that she had sincere friends in France, who not only sympathized with her cause, but also dared vigorously to oppose the policy that despatched the destroying armies.⁵³

⁵³ Of this we have positive evidence in the report of the French commander-in-chief, General Forey. In this (published in the official journal shortly after the fall of Puebla) Forey states that the speeches of Jules Favre, and others who opposed the Mexican expedition in the Corps, translated into Spanish, were found by the thousands among the spoils. (*Le Moniteur*, 19 juin, 1863.)

In 1840 the man who was to be the inspirer and director of that policy was a prisoner at Ham, in which citadel he spent the next six years. His imprisonment, however, did not prevent him from being a member of an Opposition newspaper, *Le Progrès du Pas de Calais*; and in an article which he contributed to that journal in August, 1844, he severely criticized, among other expeditions undertaken by Louis Philippe, that sent to Vera Cruz in 1838. This, he said with all the carping of a partisan, had been despatched solely for the enrichment of a few merchants, and had ended in disgraceful retreat, after giving the world unmistakable proof of France's poverty, and dealing a death blow to French influence in Mexico.⁵⁴

By a strange union of events in his own life, from 1848 to 1861, with certain of those related in this survey, the critic was given a chance to demonstrate how a Mexican expedition should be conducted. But he was to learn at the same time that with all its perfections even an Imperial expedition was open to criticism.

The opponents of his Mexican war, however, tho politicians like himself, were hardly actuated by the cheap partisanship shown by the prisoner at Ham. Indeed, no foreign policy ever met with sincerer opposition than did the Mexican policy of Louis Napoleon. And it is a question whether any domestic opposition ever showed better courage. In the middle years of the last century there was no ruler in Europe more relentless toward domestic foes than Napoleon III. It was thus no small thing to tell him in most unmistakable language that Mexican liberty, and especially American friendship, so dependent upon the attitude of France toward that liberty, were things much more precious than the realization of his own wild scheme. For this, in a word, was the slogan of the Opposition to whose story the following chapters are given.

⁵⁴ *Le Progrès du Pas de Calais*, August 3, 1844, quoted, *London Times*, January 30, 1864.

CHAPTER II

THE RISE OF THE MEXICAN QUESTION: OPPOSITION TO THE IDEA OF A MEXICAN MONARCHY UNDER THE PROTECTION OF FRANCE

"A period of doubt is always one of rumors."—JUSTIN WINSOR.

In November, 1860, the French Chambers were commanded to perform a welcome duty.¹ They were each to vote an Address in reply to the Speech delivered by the Emperor at the opening of each session of the legislature. The year 1860, therefore, was one of the most auspicious in the history of the Second Empire, for it marks the birth of free and unshackled debate² in the French Corps where dullness had reigned for a decade. Legislators alone did not share in the benefits of this renaissance; all France participated in them. After 1860 newspaper reading again became a more or less serious occupation since every citizen, thru the closely printed *comptes rendus* that appeared daily in the journals, could read what his representative thought and said about the whole domestic and foreign policy of the Empire.

The Mexican adventure, therefore, occurred when the Emperor permitted, if he did not welcome, remonstrance and opposition. The daily and periodical press, it is true, did not enjoy the new freedom, yet, on the Question of Mexico, as the following pages will amply testify, it was by no means paralyzed. Kirwan's remark that the French press in the "sixties" "lay bound and bleeding"³ is better rhetoric than fact. During those years the Imperial Government issued many *avertissements*, suspended some newspapers, and suppressed

¹ By Imperial decree, November 24.

² The following from the Duc de Morny's speech at the opening of the session (February, 1861) emphasizes this concession: "Messieurs, l'Empereur dans la plénitude de son pouvoir a voulu donner au Corps législatif un éclatant témoignage de sa confiance, en lui accordant le droit de voter une adresse, droit qui implique le libre examen de la politique intérieure et extérieure de son gouvernement." (Le Moniteur, 6 février, 1861; Annales du Sénat et du Corps Législatif, 1861, tome i, p. 2.)

³ A. V. Kirwan, *Modern France*, p. 117.

three or four. The suspensions and suppressions, however, were due to articles unrelated to Mexico; and, indeed, no authorized political journal discussing the Mexican Question, even with what the Minister of the Interior considered "intent to incite hatred for the government," ever met with anything more severe than a "warning," and an *avertissement* against such discussion was the exception rather than the rule. The Imperial government preferred rather to meet attacks on its Mexican policy by counter attacks in the columns of its official and semi-official⁴ press. The opponents of the expedition, in consequence, were given virtually as fair a chance to state their case in the press as they enjoyed in the Chamber.

In the latter arena the Emperor depended chiefly on his Ministers, and, in the former, on his official and semi-official organs, for the defense and glorification of the Mexican program. Thus in the Chamber we see the brilliant Billault (1861-1863), and Rouher (1863-1867), building up a wall of denial and ambiguity to shield the Imperial policy from the logic of Thiers, Berryer, Jules Favre, and others of that handful who believed that a fight for Mexico's liberty offered France one of the surest means of rewinning her own; while in the arena of the press we see *Le Moniteur*, *Le Constitutionnel*, *La France*, *La Patrie*, *Le Pays*, and *Le Mémorial Diplomatique* promulgating the doctrine of "Latin regeneration" to combat the pessimistic prophecies of Independent organs such as *L'Opinion Nationale*, *Le Siècle*, the *Journal des Débats*, *Le Temps*, the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and *Le Correspondant*. As time went on, and the war on the Mexican policy became more intense by events, we observe the Government and the Opposition not only hurling speeches and printing columns, but also writing enough pamphlets and books against each other to produce a small library of polemics.

Such were the circumstances of the war against the Mexican expedition, the relation of which shall presently be begun. Much has been made of that political conflict; perhaps too

⁴ Labeled by their opponents "officieux," of which term the English "inspired" is a good rendering.

much. That opposition, some think, should be listed among the principal factors of France's evacuation of Mexico in 1867. I shall have occasion, later, to evaluate such opinion; and although it is not the object of this study to impugn any opinion, it must be stated here that this study of the opposition will not lead to concurrence. We shall learn much that is worthy of record about the opposition but we shall not learn that it contributed in any appreciable measure to the withdrawal of the French from Mexico.

Opposition to the Mexican venture either in the Chamber or in the press did not begin to take effective shape until after the rejection by France of the Treaty of Soledad (April, 1862). But long before that time a Mexican Question had arisen in France. Rumor said that the Republic of Mexico was to be destroyed to make room for a monarchy, and people began to ask, after the London Convention, if such were the hidden object of that Convention.⁵ French journals at first gave the Question little attention. They were absorbed with realities rather than with rumors in November and December, 1861. And chief among the realities of those months were the events of the American Civil War. What was a mere rumor compared with the Trent Affair, which France considered as an action hostile not only to England but to all neutrals? The year 1861, however, did not close without some press comment on the London Convention. And this was unfavorable. The organ of Prince Napoleon, *L'Opinion*

⁵ The following represents circumspect opinion on the matter and was written on the date of the London Convention: "Dès aujourd'hui . . . il paraît certain que nous ne nous sommes pas trompés. Il y a un mois, en refusant à croire que la France envoie ses soldats et ses marins à travers l'Océan pour une simple expédition de saisie-arrest; l'expédition aura en tout cas une portée plus large, nous avons cru devoir nous faire aussi l'organe d'une autre objection que soulevait cette entreprise; elle prêtait à croire que les puissances intéressées voulaient profiter des embarras actuels des Etats-Unis pour une immixtion dans les affaires transocéaniques contre laquelle la doctrine Monroë a toujours hautement protesté. On serait heureux de voir cette objection disparaître par la confirmation du bruit qui attribue aux puissances occidentales le dessin d'inviter à la coopération le gouvernement de Washington. Ce serait un acte aussi habile que loyal." (*Revue Contemporaine*, 31 octobre, 1861.) The *Revue* was independent in 1861. It later became Imperialist.

Nationale, in its issue of December 21, questioned the propriety of "an expedition which ignores the feelings of the Washington government, feelings of jealousy which may not improbably be shared by the Southern Confederacy." But if the organs of Opposition were silent on the Mexican rumor their editors were thinking seriously about the Question attached to it. This we know from their comments on the Speech delivered by the Emperor, January 27, 1862, at the opening of the legislature.

In this Speech which contains the first official announcement of the expedition, the "exposé" of France's foreign policy was very brief and vague. The Emperor satisfied himself with the statement that in China the Annamites feebly resisted the power of France and that she would not be at war with any people "if in Mexico, the acts of an unscrupulous government had not obliged her to join Spain and England in protecting nationals, and in suppressing attempts against humanity and the rights of nations. But," he concluded, "nothing could arise out of that conflict of a nature to shake confidence in the future."⁶ These remarks failed to dispel as they ignored the rumor. The conservative *Journal des Débats*⁷ in commenting on them said:

It was announced for several days that the Emperor's Speech would touch only slightly upon foreign affairs; the document, in fact, is marked with a character of great reserve; no mention, even indirect, is made, in the passage relating to Mexico, of those projects of monarchical revolution on which the European press has been occupied for several days.

*L'Opinion Nationale*⁸ and other Independents said much the same thing. The inspired *Le Constitutionnel*,⁹ however,

⁶ *Le Moniteur*, 28 janvier, 1862; *Annales*, 1862, tome i, p. 62.

⁷ 28 janvier, 1862.

⁸ "As for Mexico," this organ complained, "the Emperor speaks of protecting our countrymen there and of repressing the outrages against humanity and the law of nations; not a single word about the erecting of a throne or of the candidates for whom it was said to be destined." (Quoted without date, *London Times*, January 31, 1862.)

⁹ 28 janvier, 1862. This paper waited till the following day to attack the monarchical rumor, designating all assertions based on it "d'insinuations malévoles."

found the Imperial Discourse perfect in substance, form and expression.

But it was evident, in spite of all this perfection, that as regards Mexico, the Imperial Speech left much to be desired; and evident, also, that the rumor could not well be wholly ignored. The Official Journal, therefore, in its issue of February 1, gave the troublesome matter some attention. It announced that while there was

a strong faction in Mexico disposed to repudiate the republic that had proved so fatal to the country and desirous of setting up a constitutional monarchy under a foreign prince, the Allies should not care to put forth any pretensions on their own account as they would give rise to ideas of conquest which could not fail to wound the national self-respect.

Its issue of the next day was more explicit. It then said that tho the sole object of the expedition was the protection of nationals and the upholding of the law of nations, an imperious necessity existed for the intervening Powers to complete the work they were about to undertake by assuring the future and constituting in Mexico in accordance with the wishes of the people a strong and durable government with which Europe in the future might be able to form solid and pacific relations.

These assertions were evasive. It was not a question what the allied Powers were going to do in Mexico, but what France herself intended to do there. But, apparently, the answer to this pressing Question was not to be sought either from the Emperor or from his press. There remained the Chamber, however, where the debates on the Address came up in March.¹⁰ Silence on the Question there was impossible, and the Government now forced to answer it, and unable to do so with candor, replied with ridicule.

It is important to note that the Question was not introduced by the Radical Opposition, who had planned to make it the preamble of an attack on the Government, but by an obscure deputy who due to an error on the part of the president of the Corps spoke out of his turn. The mistake in procedure was nevertheless a happy one, for by Achille Jubi-

¹⁰ March 13.

nal's occupation of the floor before the Corps had listened with impatience and hostility to Jules Favre and other cordially disliked Liberals, we are enabled to learn what it thought, in 1862, of the subversion of Mexico's liberty. Jubinal's address, *Le Moniteur* tells us, was applauded generously; and had *Le Moniteur's* reporter been independent, he might have added that all except extreme Imperialists joined in applauding words which so well expressed the mind of France on Mexico. And the speech. It was not a jewel of oratory. It was not such as fell from the lips of a Favre. Yet it is to be doubted that Jules Favre with all his art could have forced the Government into a corner more effectively than did Achille Jubinal, whose words, in substance, were that no patriot attacked the French expedition to Mexico. Rather, indeed, did all wish for a speedy triumph there for French arms. But all France had another wish besides. It wished from the Government a direct and definite answer to the following questions on the subject of the expedition. Jubinal did not waste words and went straight to the questions:

It is common opinion that France has gone to Mexico to overthrow an established government and to substitute for the republican government there a monarchy. Is this correct? And more serious still is the rumor that a throne is to be set up under the protection of French bayonets and reserved for some member of the Belgian, Spanish, or German Houses. Is this true? And some further observations in order to obtain enlightenment. If France has sent an army to Mexico solely to defend her nationals and her interests there more effectively, all must thank the Government; but if, on the contrary, French forces are in Mexico for what rumor asserts, and are merely marching in the trail of vulgar conspirators whose names the journals of Europe have published, to overthrow a free government and an independent people and to impose upon them any form of government whatever, what has become of that great principle of non-intervention which France has so often and so well proclaimed and made so well understood?

Such rumors, M. Jubinal concluded, were in his opinion so opposed to everything French that he was confident that the Government in replying to them would find a proud occasion of proving that France had not lost for Mexico the sympathies with which she had ever been animated for all peoples gravitating toward progress, and that she recognized in what

was going on in Mexico merely a distant echo of the Principles of '89.¹¹

The president, after a brief apology¹² for his mistake in order then gave Favre the floor. The latter, who was well pleased with Jubinal's speech, replied that he welcomed errors that produced such fine orations. He then read an Opposition amendment expressing regret that the Mexican expedition seemed to have as its object an intervention in the internal affairs of Mexico, and praying the Government to reconsider its plans and stay within the limits officially announced, and thus pursue only the reparation of its griefs. The speech supporting this amendment contained many praises for Jubinal and many more lashes at a Government that was about to provide a throne for the Archduke Maximilian of which object, among other things, stressed Favre, the boasts of officers leaving for Mexico were convincing proof.¹³

When the fulmination stopped Minister Billault calmly rose, and undertook the defense. His reply was masterful. He found it a painful commentary on French patriotism that while French troops were marching on Mexico City, Frenchmen dared to charge before France and the Corps that those brave men were the mere instruments of an intrigue, and that the war they fought in Mexico was a base and unlawful one. He did not think that such discussion was either opportune or patriotic, but since doubts had been cast on the object of the expedition he was happy to summarize "sans phrase" the facts of the Mexican expedition for the Corps and the nation. He then entered into a rather lengthy review of French relations with Mexico in the 19th century, in which, he said, the real explanation of the Mexican expedition was to be found, and not in the idle rumors that only led people

¹¹ See *Le moniteur*, 14 mars, 1862; *Annales*, 1862, tome ii, pp. 156-157.

¹² It was also a little provocative. "J'ai," he said, "commis une petite erreur. J'aurais dû mettre en discussion l'amendement de MM. Jules Favre, Hénon, Darimon, Picard, et Emile Ollivier; mais je suis un peu excusable; ces messieurs ont tant d'amendements."

¹³ See *Le Moniteur*, 14 mars, 1862; *Annales*, 1862, tome ii, pp. 157-163.

astray. And, he went on, just as history showed why a French army was in Mexico so the topography of that country and the rendezvous of its diabolical government showed why French troops were marching on Mexico City, for it was there, he added, that dwelt those men who were the agents of all the sorrows that troubled Mexico to the sorrow of mankind, and there it was that that blow must be struck which would give Mexico back her health. That blow could never be dealt from the coast whose lowlands reeked with a fever that would soon destroy the Allies. It was in Mexico City alone, then, that France could impose by force the respect of French rights so long insulted and the execution of obligations long contracted towards her.

These facts alone, he insisted, told why a French army was in Mexico and why it was at that very moment entering her capital. And as for the monarchical rumor, that, he concluded, was incredible nonsense. Some officers on leaving for Mexico had said that they were going there to place a foreign prince on the throne of Montezuma. Indeed! Did the Corps imagine that if such were the solemn secret and intention of French diplomacy it would be handed to troops for broadcasting? The idea was quite ridiculous!¹⁴

Both sides having now been heard, the Corps was called upon to vote on the Mexican paragraph¹⁵ of the Address which expressed the wish that the expedition concerted with Spain and England be energetically prosecuted till complete satisfaction had been procured for French nationals and interests in Mexico. This was adopted without amendment.¹⁶ And, indeed, none seemed called for after Billault's remarks.

¹⁴ See *Le Moniteur*, 14 mars, 1862; *Annales*, 1862, tome ii, pp. 163-164. The French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Thouvenel, informed Minister Dayton that the United States might take Billault's speech on Mexico "as an embodiment of the views and purposes of the French government . . . ;" and Secretary Seward professed to receive it as such. See *U. S. Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1862, part 1, pp. 338-339.

¹⁵ Paragraph 6.

¹⁶ 242 deputies voted for it. Favre, Picard and five others opposed it, concerning whom *Le Constitutionnel* said: "Ils ont pris plus de temps et fait plus de bruit que les 242 députés qui ont voté l'Adresse." (Quoted *Débats*, 26 mars, 1862.)

The Mexican Question was, after all, quite a minor one. Such was the opinion that prevailed in middle March. Before the end of the month, however, this pleasant thought was disturbed by news from Mexico where, it was learned, a dissension had occurred among the Allies over a treaty signed between themselves and President Juarez. Information was scant, and the particulars of the convention were not yet known in France. But inspired journals, which denied the break, said that, according to its terms, the English forces were to embark without delay, the Spanish to retire to Cuba, and French reinforcements, recently sent out from Brest, were to return to France without landing, and that further negotiations were to open April 1 at Orizaba, and finally, that in consequence of these events people might reasonably expect a pacific solution and a sufficient guarantee for the security of the future so far as the interests of European residents in Mexico were concerned.

This optimism was peculiar only to Imperialist newspapers. Others were sceptical, and the following comment of *La Gazette de France*¹⁷ on the situation is representative of their scepticism:

If this news be correct, we must regard the Mexican expedition at an end. Some will call it a failure. We are, however, justified in doubting it when we recall the words of Mr. Billault in the Corps on March 13, which were to this effect, "Our troops left Vera Cruz on the 20th of February and at the moment I am speaking they are in Mexico City." This it seems to us is not so if indeed our flag remains planted only a few miles from the coast. If a convention has been concluded between the Allies and Juarez we must attribute such a result, so inferior to what had been announced, to the dissensions of the Allies which were noted in a letter published in *Le Moniteur*, and which were alluded to in the debates in the English Parliament. We do not know the nature of these dissensions; whether they were about the definitive object of the expedition about which so many rumors circulated and which have never been satisfactorily explained, or whether they refer to the line of conduct to be followed, or the means to be employed. Be this as it may; Spain never seemed to agree with France, each of these two Powers wishing to all appearances to keep to itself the direction of operations, while on the other hand England soon withdrew her stake, and from the beginning expressed her intention never to mix herself up in any expedition into the interior and to negotiate separately with a view to securing the interests of her subjects. In these circumstances it

¹⁷ Quoted without date, London Times, April 3, 1862.

is wise to wait for some information which no doubt the Government will give in order to satisfy public curiosity.

That all was not well in Mexico was made more evident by a statement in *Le Moniteur*, April 3, that the Emperor was dissatisfied with the way things had gone there, and that the Imperial Government had repudiated the Convention of Soledad¹⁸ as one contrary to the dignity of France, and that a French signatory of that unacceptable Convention had been divested of all diplomatic power and sent back to his last naval command. As to why, specifically, the Convention had been rejected, *Le Moniteur* and the semi-officials were silent.¹⁹

The Mexican situation was, indeed, one calculated to arouse public curiosity, which, contrary to the expectations of *La Gazette*, the Government was in no haste to satisfy. One fact, however, loomed up above the mists of the situation. It was that the Imperial Government seemed resolved to have nothing to do with Juarez.

April passed, and people were little better informed on Mexican affairs than when the month began. It was felt, however, that something, even if a fiction, should be said in order to lighten spirits. *Le Constitutionnel*, therefore, started the new month with the story that the dissension among the Allies had been patched up and that the French and Spanish were about to march against Mexico City, joining forces at Puebla for that purpose. And, continued the fable, the Convention of Soledad, having been now disavowed by all the Allies, people could hope to learn shortly of the entrance of the allied forces into Mexico City.

This cheering "news" concluded by expressing the belief that

¹⁸ On the same date the *Débats* published, without comment of its own, the full text of this Convention.

¹⁹ To illustrate, the inspired *La Patrie*, which had reported matters at length from the beginning of the year, became quite sparing of Mexican news after April 3, when it admitted a break with Juarez. "*Les plénipotentiaires du Président Juarez*," it said, "*avant élevé des prétensions inqualifiables, les conférences ont été rompues le 18 mars*." *La Patrie*, however, gave no hint of a rupture among the Allies. The *Débats* (1^{er} mai) pointed to this peculiar silence with emphasis.

even those most indifferent to the just griefs for which France pursues a reparation will now agree, after two months of new proof that it would be absurd to employ anything less than coercion against a government that proceeds only by spoliation and pillage towards private individuals, both foreigners and natives, and does not hesitate to spill blood to prolong for a few hours its detestable domination, and which shows itself so unspeakably bold as to demand France to deliver to its fury some persons who have freely placed themselves under the protection of her flag, an affront that surpasses all others, and gives the measure of the moral consequences that the prolongation of conferences would entrain.²⁰

By another fortnight, however, the truth began to break thru the crust,²¹ and everybody knew the hard facts of the Mexican situation; namely, that a final break among the Allies had occurred April 9, at a place called Orizaba, during a conference²² over the construction of the London Treaty; that France's formal disavowal at that conference of the Soledad Treaty had resulted in the withdrawal of the Spanish and English troops from Mexico, which both abandoned April 22; and, that the reinforcements (sent out under Lorencez) instead of returning to Europe had joined the little army which the rupture had exposed to the mercy of the Mexicans.

This news created widespread dissatisfaction in France.²³ But even when the serious break was yet unknown, and the intervention was still believed to be a tri-national affair, and one, therefore, of mutual charges and responsibilities, some dissatisfaction was expressed at the too great part France seemed to be taking in it. It was felt that she was going too far when she was doing more than England, who had as serious cause for complaint against the Mexicans as she, and whose claims, indeed, were very much larger. England, it was further observed, had wisely limited her action, and this

²⁰ *Le Constitutionnel*, 2, 8, mai, 1862.

²¹ Slowly, however, as manifested by the *Débats*; on May 16, this paper found the news from Mexico too contradictory to be sure that a rupture had occurred; the next day it felt that England had "receded" and on May 18, it considered that Spain, too, had broken with France, its opinion being based on a *Moniteur* report that France would not treat with Juarez.

²² This Conference is reported in full in Francisco de Arrangoiz, *Méjico desde 1808 hasta 1867*, III, 40-58.

²³ See *Débats*, 23 mai, 1862.

not because she was in the habit of neglecting the defense of her honor and interests; for she had as Prime Minister Lord Palmerston, a statesman who demanded for his countrymen everywhere the rights of the "civis Romanus." It was impossible in consequence, said a very able critic, for people to understand why France wished to do more in Mexico than England did. And would it not be better, said the same observer, far better, for France to keep her expeditionary costs on a par with England's by confining her action to an embargo on the ports where duties were received instead of undertaking a costly penetration into the interior which, indeed, the state of French finances positively forbade? ²⁴

The new position of France in Mexico, no matter how the Government might object to such complaints, plainly called for apologetics of some sort; and for this task the inspired press was quite prepared. *Le Constitutionnel*, always first if not always right, inaugurated the defense in its issue of May 19 with a long article on Mexico. The "Cinco de Mayo" was not yet known in Europe, so *Le Constitutionnel* was free to glorify, as the opening paragraph of its article did to superfluity, the first steps of the French on Mexico City.

These, as we know, won easy victories in the skirmishes that took place as they approached Puebla at the end of April. Those skirmishes *Le Constitutionnel* raised almost to the rank of battles, and after pointing out the "advantages" they gave to France, expressed sham regret that "the Spanish and the English flags were not alongside those of the French when the first blood was spilled," and that "in an expedition begun in common, the victory was to France alone; and," the Imperialist went on,

we shall make it plain, in the face of all criticism, that France, now standing alone in Mexico, has not sought that situation, but, on the contrary, has done everything to avoid it. The reason that France is alone, is to be explained by the habit of France never to draw back from any sacrifice that will benefit humanity and civilization. Nor is she wont to give way before the accomplishment of a duty, and in this case the duty was not doubtful, . . . for what France, England, and Spain were about to accomplish in Mexico, three memorable documents inform us . . .

²⁴ See *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 avril, 1862.

The article, then alluding to and quoting from the Speeches delivered by the sovereigns of Spain, England, and France, at the opening of the contemporary sessions of their respective parliaments, "all of which Speeches denounced the anarchy of Mexico, and emphasized the need of punitive intervention there," asked if that anarchy had ceased since the Allies had landed in Mexico. "Not in the least," it answered. "Every reason that led to the resolutions of the allied Powers in respect to Mexico subsists still, and, in fact, more than ever; and a retreat in such circumstances is no more justifiable than the departure of firemen when a conflagration is at its height." The action of Spain and England, *Le Constitutionnel* held, was therefore very unjust, and unworthy; "for is such abandonment," it asked, "worthy of governments that understand honor and dignity so well on all occasions? But, happily," it concluded, "whatever may happen, the cause of civilization will not be abandoned by France, and the hopes of a large number of the oppressed who have witnessed the arrival (of the troops) with such joy will not be disappointed . . . and," observed the Imperialist, addressing itself especially to the Opposition, "let it be understood that it is not conquest that France meditates but the deliverance of a people . . . and if civilization, and the highest interests of European commerce shall owe this service to our arms, we shall have nothing but thanksgiving to offer for our acts."²⁵

Le Moniteur,²⁶ too, joined the apologists at this time, condescending to "enlighten the public as to the late resolutions of the French plenipotentiaries, which are the object of different opinions on the part of the European press." This enlightenment consisted of a reproduction of Articles 1 and 2 of the London Convention, accompanied with an extract from the instructions sent by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to Admiral Jurien de la Gravière²⁷ in November, 1861, and later repeated to Baron Saligny, who acting on them re-

²⁵ *Le Constitutionnel*, 19 mai, 1862.

²⁶ 20 mai, 1862.

²⁷ The signatory of the Soledad Convention who "was sent back to his last naval command," and who soon after resigned his commission in consequence of the rebuke.

nounced the Treaty of Soledad, and ordered the French troops to march on Mexico City. "This extract," said the *Moniteur*, "showed clearly the meaning which the Emperor's Government attached to the provisions of the aforesaid articles." It reads, in translation, as follows:

. . . The interests of our dignity and considerations founded on circumstances connected with the climate of the coast unite in exacting a prompt and decisive result. It is principally with a view to that eventuality that there is placed at your disposal a body of troops for landing, and which with the other military contingents will furnish the Allies with the means of extending their range of action. The Emperor's Government admits that either to reach the Mexican government or to render more effectual the coercion exercised on it by taking its ports you may find it necessary to combine a movement into the interior of the country which might lead the allied forces as far as Mexico City itself. . . . The allied Powers do not as I have told you propose to themselves any other object than that indicated in the (London) Convention; they interdict themselves from exercising any pressure on the will of the (Mexican) people as to the choice of their government. There are, however, certain hypotheses which impose themselves on our foresight, and which we must examine. It may happen that the presence of the allied troops on Mexican territory might determine the right thinking part of the population who are tired of anarchy and anxious for order and repose to make an effort to establish in the country a government presenting the guarantee of strength and stability which have been wanting to all those that have succeeded one another since the emancipation. The allied Powers have a common and too manifest interest in seeing Mexico escape from the state of social dissolution into which she is plunged, and a state which paralyzes all development of her prosperity and annuls for herself and humanity all the riches with which Providence had endowed a privileged soil and which state obliges them (the Allies) to have recourse periodically to costly expeditions in order to remind ephemeral and senseless governments of their duties. . . . These things must engage them therefore not to discourage attempts of a nature of those just pointed out to you, and you ought not refuse them your encouragement and your moral support if from the position of the men who take the initiative in them and from the sympathy which they may find in the mass of the people they should present chances of success for the establishment of an order of things of a nature to secure the interests of foreign residents that protection and those guarantees which have hitherto been wanting to them.

It was the purpose of *Le Moniteur* to justify the action of the French plenipotentiaries on the grounds of the London Convention, and having given its readers the above information, it stressed the fact that copies of these instructions had been in the hands of the Allies since November, 1861, and then left one to conclude that since Spain and England had

not formally objected to them they had implicitly concurred with the French interpretation of the Convention of London, which their withdrawal from Mexico had, in consequence, gravely violated.

But this, after all, was a mere hope, for the resolutions of the English and Spanish plenipotentiaries lent themselves as readily to different interpretation as did those of the French. And people, in fact, paid little attention to the question of treaty interpretation. What troubled them were facts that no diplomatic mists could well hide, and which, in their opinion, stood behind the French interpretation of the London agreement. The brazen actions of Baron Saligny and his suite were well known in France, and those doings and all they connoted were regarded with the deep concern expressed in the following from *Le Temps*:²⁸

It is on patriotic grounds that we should deplore seeing the Government persist in the tone which seems indicated by the late incidents. 'To give,' as is expressed in the instructions of M. Thouvenel, 'moral support to the right-thinking part of the population,' who should change the form of government seemed to us imprudent and excessive. But are we not engaged further? It is in our train that the general, Almonte, issues his proclamations, and we thus appear as the originators of a movement to which we should only render moral assistance. General Almonte very much resembles, at this moment, Monsieur (Comte d'Artois), the brother of the King, when hanging in the rear of the Allies, who came to deliver France from the 'imperial tyranny'; and as other journals have already observed, Admiral Jurien de la Gravière speaks like the Duke of Angoulême at the opening of the campaign in Spain, or rather like the Duke of Brunswick in 1792. We will not compare the French Republic to the Mexican Republic. We make every allowance for the difference between the two peoples, and the two situations. But this allowance once made—the French people placed very high and the Mexican people very low—there will still remain a pretty strong resemblance between the two. We have the appearance of wishing to impose happiness on the Mexicans, when we never permitted anybody to render the same service to us; and whatever may be said or done, this contradiction is not trifling. That we shall succeed in our undertaking if we persist in it is doubted by no one. But in a practical point of view it is not only the immediate result, but the remoter consequences which we should consider. Will Monarchy in Mexico be more solid than the Republic? Will France after having restored it take it upon herself to defend it against intestine divisions and against the probable hostility of the United States? These are questions which present themselves and which patriotism bids us weigh and discuss.

²⁸ Quoted, *London Times*, May 26, 1862.

The Government of Napoleon III could not have liked such questioning. Had it not made it clear that such discussion was quite irrelevant and even unpatriotic? The Emperor could have suppressed all criticism with a single stroke. But he would not, for he felt secure enough in the "sixties" to be liberal. Therefore, he restrained the hand of his censor, and his press, admitting that "public attention was directed with increasing interest to the operations begun in Mexico,"²⁰ set to work to save the public from the reprobate by addressing it in terms calculated to raise the Mexican policy high above the dust of discussion. And this it was thought was to be accomplished by glowing pictures displaying sensational combats in which French regiments crushed the armies of Mexico's oppressors, and gave her the peace and order for which she thirsted. Thus in the Government organs we find the expedition thruout its duration the subject of glorious descriptions, interspersed now and then with a severe rebuke to the press of the Opposition. This scheme worked well in the early days of the exploit when, due to the slow transmission of news of those days and the suppression of inconvenient facts, the Emperor had things pretty much in his favor.

A fair example of the news by which public curiosity was to be satisfied is found in the *Moniteur* of June 5, 1862. The disaster of May 5 was still unknown in France, and it was possible, therefore, with a degree of honesty and certainty "to sum up," as the phrase read, "the military facts that up to the present have signalized the presence of the French forces in Mexico." *Le Moniteur* begins its account with April 18, a date especially satisfactory "when" the reader was told, "General Lorencz (the French commander-in-chief) arrived at Cordoba to carry into execution the Treaty of Soledad" but which Treaty the general could not carry out because of the base actions of a Mexican general who was threatening some French wounded at Orizaba. "Lorencez," the story went on, "learning of that threat issued the following order," which *Le Moniteur* published as a part of its review:

²⁰ *Le Moniteur*, 5 juin, 1862.

Soldiers and sailors, notwithstanding the assassinations committed on your comrades, and the encouragements given those attacks by the proclamations of the Mexican government, I was desirous of remaining faithful, to the last moment, to the accomplishment of the obligations of the plenipotentiaries of the three Allied Powers, but I have just received a letter from the Mexican general, Zaragoza, in which the safety of our sick, left at Orizaba under the safeguard of the convention, is disgracefully threatened. In the presence of such an act hesitation can no longer be felt. Let us march on Orizaba to the succor of the 400 of our comrades threatened by this cowardly attack. Let us march to their rescue to the cry of 'Vive l'Empereur.'

"The following day," *Le Moniteur* continued, "Lorencez' forces marched." Then followed, in Caesarian fashion, a minute account of the French successes against the barbarians. The story was carried up to events of April 28, closing with the happy statement that "the troops are in excellent spirits; cases of yellow fever few" and that the army marched on Puebla "meeting with the acclaim of the people which proves," *Le Moniteur* concluded, "that the French mission is well understood, as it will be faithfully fulfilled."

But if Mexicans "well understood" the French "mission" many Frenchmen did not. Government information, in fact, was not well informing; and an influential political reviewer of the day, Forcade of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*,⁸⁰ expressed the feelings of many in an article he contributed to that periodical complaining of the scanty information offered by the Government on the Mexican expedition, both before and after that exploit began.

Until our Government shall have informed us as to the logical development of its policy we must feel embarrassed in judging it. It is painful for us to have to criticize the policy of the government whatever be its form in foreign matters when the honor of the country and the blood of its soldiers are engaged. But we must admit that until we get full information as to the manner in which affairs in Mexico have been conducted both in a military and political point of view, the policy of the government is open in appearance at least to grave objections.

M. Forcade greatly deplored the break up of the coalition which had occurred, he said, because the Government had forgotten that "no state can obtain and maintain a common

⁸⁰ 1^{er} juin, 1862.

action but on condition of keeping a policy within clearly defined limits"; and, describing the fruit of such forgetfulness, he well remarked that it would have been far better if France had acted alone from the beginning, for thus she would not have been encumbered by allies who by their abandonment of her became prejudicial. Alluding to the political situation in Mexico, Forcade said that it was proper enough for one to desire to see the government there give way to one more honorable and better disposed, and if the presence of the European troops on Mexican soil induced people to rise against Juarez it would be perfectly legitimate, he said, to accept the aid a national movement might give against a common enemy, and legitimate too to facilitate the establishment of another government more dependable and civilized. He considered the London Convention elastic enough for such a contingency, but not for the movement headed by General Almonte, who, protected by the French, propagated the idea of a Mexican monarchy in favor of the Archduke Maximilian.

It was that protection, said Forcade, that destroyed irreparably the coalition, and in spite of it, he concluded, he still hoped that the Government was not pledged to support Almonte's program, his hope being based on a recent statement of Foreign Minister Thouvenel, who alluding to Mexico remarked to the English Minister to Paris that it was to be regretted that

in their first proclamation the allied commissioners appeared to say that the intervention aimed more at setting up a new government than at obtaining reparation for damages, and, also, that it was not well appreciated that such a policy (that of establishing a foreign government in Mexico) was inconsistent with the principles as well as with the interests of France who abiding by the Principles of 1789 could not think for a moment of imposing a monarchical government on Mexico, whatever causes of complaint be given her by the anarchy which prevails there.

This statement of Thouvenel's was clear cut and satisfactory enough. But what was it really worth? A letter published without comment in *Le Temps*³¹ about a fortnight later gave indications that M. Thouvenel and the French

³¹ Quoted, *London Times*, June 14, 1862.

Foreign Office were ill-informed as to the Imperial plans for Mexico. This letter, which became famous, was General Prim's reply to a congratulatory note from Napoleon III (published together with it), and flatly contradicted everything said both by Thouvenel and Billault in reference to the monarchical rumor.³²

Prim wrote it at Orizaba, March 17, 1862, and in it, after thanking the Emperor for his good wishes, stated that since the arrival of Almonte with his idea of creating a monarchy supported by the Emperor of the French the situation in Mexico had become impossible; and respectfully informing Napoleon that his, the Spanish forces, were quitting the country, he closed with the following prophetic and much quoted words:

I am far from supposing, Sire, that your Majesty cannot raise a throne in Mexico for the House of Austria . . . but that king will not get the good will of the Mexican people . . . he (the Austrian) will fall from the throne raised by your Majesty, as the other powers of the earth will fall, the day on which your Majesty's Imperial mantle shall cease to cover and defend them. . . .

And so the "incredible nonsense" again found its way into print. But this time the resurgent rumor, so disconcerting to Ministers, was eclipsed by another rumor that destroyed the composure of all: The French army had suffered defeat before Puebla, and had retreated in haste and disorder to Orizaba!³³ The terrible news of the Cinco de Mayo had reached France at last.

The *Moniteur* had, day after day, carried on its story of a glorious march on Puebla, and the attentive public learned of the splendid progress of Lorencez and his division, six thousand strong. The march of the French, in fact, appeared like a military parade. The Mexicans seemed to offer no re-

³² During a debate in the Corps (June 26) Billault again denied the monarchical rumor. The *Débats* (28 juin) reporting this denial said: "On ne peut plus douter après ce discours que nous allions jusqu'à Mexico. Mais il semblait que le gouvernement français ait abandonné l'idée d'intervenir dans la politique intérieure du Mexique." Dayton had no doubt that the idea was abandoned and sent Seward a translation of "this most authentic exposé of the purposes of France." (U. S. Dip. Cor. 1862, part 1, pp. 356-371.)

³³ See *Débats*, 14 juin, 1862.

sistance, if one might accept *Le Moniteur's* accounts which showed Lorencez, on May 2, five days after he left Orizaba, in full possession of the strategic position of Amozoc, and on the 4th, drawn up before his objective, Puebla. But for news of the 5th readers had to seek elsewhere than in the *Official Journal*; and from organs which filled up the lacuna they learned the following painful facts: The Mexican army which had continued its retreat before Lorencez entrenched itself at Puebla May 4, and on the 5th, Lorencez, repulsed with severe losses, fell back on Orizaba to await reinforcements. Such, in a word, was the Mexican "communiqué" of May 5, which people read either in foreign journals or in extracts from these in the *Independent press*.³⁴

Le Moniteur, continuing its favorable accounts, ignored the rumor. But not so the inspired press. At first the leaders in this, *Le Constitutionnel* and *La Patrie*, both denied the check.³⁵ Persistent denial, however, was not possible in the face of the reinforcements of ten thousand that were ordered to Mexico, and the request by the Minister of War for fifteen million francs credit, the bill asking these extra millions being presented to the Corps June 16. *La Patrie* then attempted to minimize the affair of the 5th while it glorified the policy that led to it. Reporting the Corps' favorable action on the war credits it said: ³⁶

The Chamber eagerly agreed to the Government's proposals. . . . Thus the Legislative Body finds itself once again in concert with public opinion. Its eagerness to sanction indispensable expenses is an adhesion to the truly national policy of the Emperor. And as various speakers observed, the Chamber can discuss at some oppor-

³⁴ *La Patrie* (13 juin, 1862) viciously attacked these "bruits alarmans que les journaux anglais continuent à répandre."

³⁵ In issues of June 13 and 14. Reporting news from Vera Cruz, dated May 15, *La Patrie* was bold enough to state that "l'armée française a livré en avant de Puebla un combat long et très glorieux. Les troupes mexicaines, de beaucoup supérieures en nombre, ont été complètement battues. Les Français devaient, dit-on, dès le lendemain faire leur entrée dans la ville." (Quoted, *Débats*, 15 juin, 1862.) Such was *La Patrie's* "communiqué" of the 13th. It still carried on the bluff on the 15th, then announcing that "la petite armée française était toujours au camp d'Amozoc, où elle n'avait pas été inquiétée par l'ennemi." (Quoted, *ibid.*, 17 juin, 1862.)

³⁶ June 18, 1862; quoted *London Times*, June 19, 1862.

tune moment the question relating to the expedition to Mexico. The opportunity will be offered when the discussion of the Budget comes on. But under the present circumstances this is not the moment for a discussion in some measure out of keeping with the very object which the Government has in view. The object is the despatch of considerable reinforcements destined not to relieve our army at Puebla but to reassure the results which our brave soldiers have certainly obtained on the road to Mexico (City). Everything, moreover, allows us now to reduce the affair of May 5th to its real value. The failure of a sudden attack has simply delayed the advance of the expedition. But, however it may be, it is indispensable that the corps d'armée which left France on the faith of the London Convention should be increased by reinforcements to supply the vacuum left by the re-embarkation of the contingents of England and Spain.

To be sure there was something in this statement to agree with; yet people who had no reason to "reduce the affair of May 5th to its real value" accepted it at its face value, and deduced from it for the interventionists the following lessons:

1. It was on the faith of Almonte's promise that the Mexican population would meet it half-way that the little French army, weakened by the withdrawal of the Spaniards, began its march on Mexico City. The repulse at Puebla shows that promise to be fallacious, for the population did not stir. The data, therefore, on which France was to act does not exist and the French intervention has no longer any ground on which to stand.

2. The check further teaches that the Government of Juarez, contrary to everything said against it, is relatively the most stable and popular of all those that have followed each other for the last forty years, for it did not vanish before the courage and prestige of the French troops like those of the Miramons and Santa Annas before the first Mexicans who showed energy and will.

3. Lastly, it is to be learned that what was checked at Guadaloupe was not the valour of the French troops but the very idea of intervention.³⁷

The Government, however, was not seeking enlightenment, and its *Moniteur* continued complacently to publish scraps of favorable news among which appeared a report of Lorencez to the Ministry of War that gave a less unsatisfactory version of the action of May 5th, which was a great event, even if the French were obliged to retreat, for the enemy losses were heavy and the troops as usual covered themselves with glory.³⁸

³⁷ Substance of comment in *Le Temps* (June 19, 1862); quoted, *London Times*, June 20, 1862.

³⁸ See *Le Moniteur*, 1er juillet, 1862.

But the very report itself did not escape the scrutiny of the critics. The *Débats*³⁹ called attention to what it called a "serious contradiction" in Lorencez' despatch.

General Lorencez begins by observing that what constituted his chief error in his march on Puebla was the impossibility of obtaining any true information on his way, so great was the intimidation exercised on the population, whom they knew to be hostile to Juarez, and he further admits in covert terms that Puebla was untruly described to him as the city the most hostile to Juarez. It is difficult to conceive that it was intimidation alone which forced the population not to testify their sympathy for the French at least by giving them some positive information.

Le Constitutionnel, which ordinarily replied to this paper's attacks, ignored this comment and devoted itself instead to lengthy columns on subjects allowing more ready denial. Under such headings as "The New Situation of France in Mexico" and "The Jecker Bonds," therefore, it lashed right and left at those

who in spite of the exposé so eloquent and sincere of M. Billault in a recent sitting of the Legislative Body, and the explanations so complete given by that orator that leave not a single doubt in the conscience or patriotism of the Chamber, still try to denature the policy of France on the Mexican Question, and to fix on the Government intentions it has never entertained and engagements it has never made.⁴⁰

It was said in some quarters that France made its support of Maximilian for the Mexican throne dependent upon the cession of Venetia.⁴¹ This was a ridiculous charge, yet its refutation, the first of the two articles noted above, was still more ridiculous by the solemnity with which *Le Constitutionnel* replied. The other on the Jecker Bonds, which was a rejoinder to the more serious charge that predatory interests alone were protected by the French flag in Mexico, was well done, so well indeed, that it doubtless convinced the average

³⁹ July 3, 1862; quoted, *London Times*, July 4, 1862.

⁴⁰ *Le Constitutionnel*, 6 juillet, 1862.

⁴¹ See *ibid.* In its article *Le Constitutionnel* admitted that there was some truth in the rumor that a new government was to be set up in Mexico but insisted that "ce fut plutôt une hypothèse qu'un projet," which the new situation caused to be abandoned. The *Débats* (7 juillet), calling general attention to the article, expressed the hope if not the expectancy that it would be definitely abandoned.

reader that there was something to be said in Jecker's favor after all. The article laid the propaganda against Jecker at the door of England, "which," it said, "holds Mexican securities to the amount of sixty-five million francs, or more than half the debt of the country." The following illustrates the manner in which the article attempts to fasten the Jecker story on England:

Has not England an interest in setting aside the securities of other creditors in order to preserve for herself a debtor less encumbered, and to create for herself a privilege and a right of priority? And have not the English agents played a skilful game in the interest of their countrymen in discrediting and in endeavoring to procure the extinction of the bonds representing the Miramon loan, subscribed by a French house and by French merchants, and in securing to their bondholders the regular payment of the interest on a capital which fell nearly eighty-two or eighty-three per cent. under the price at which it was issued? At present, as the protection of French interests has been consecrated by diplomatic acts, it cannot be withdrawn. It covers, moreover, a just cause, and if the English Minister, through motives easily understood, had not, during the conferences at Orizaba, withdrawn the consent he had given for its examination, we should not now be forced to struggle in the midst of the deluge of calumnies with which we have unexpectedly been assailed. But the truth will appear. M. Billault has solemnly proclaimed it. A commission, composed of impartial men, will be entrusted with the examination of an affair of which it was desired to avoid discussion, and the result will prove that legitimate interests alone are protected by the French flag.⁴²

This remained unanswered, for the repulse at Puebla had caused a lull in all criticism of the expedition. That painful event made it difficult even for the bitterest opponents to carry on the attack. These now demanded as ardently as the supporters of the enterprise that the Government despatch without delay all reinforcements necessary to relieve the expeditionary forces.⁴³ But the situation did not render them

⁴² Ibid., 7 juillet, 1862; quoted, London Times, July 8, 1862.

⁴³ Le Correspondant, juin, 1862. The following from this organ well expresses the general temper: "Les armes françaises ont subi un échec en avant de la Puebla, et à cette nouvelle, comme il arrive toujours dans notre pays, les divergences d'opinion se sont effacées pour faire place à un sentiment patriotique unanime. Nous étions de ceux qui auraient jusque-là critiqué le plus vivement l'expédition mexicaine; nous réclamons maintenant plus ardemment que personne que le gouvernement impérial se hâte d'envoyer les renforts qu'il a annoncés au secours de nos braves soldats compromis si loin de leur terre natale au milieu d'une population hostile."

mute. They informed the Government that France, even in the midst of disaster, still contemplated with repugnance the idea of monarchical revolution in Mexico. That project they said must altogether be dropped. France had not the least advantage to derive from it. Nor did the security of French traders in Mexico require it, for these could make money under a regular government of republican form. There would be, it was stressed, nothing for France in monarchical installation but two deprecable things, namely, the intolerable expense of a general and perpetual occupation of Mexico, and, the more deplorable of the two, the antagonism of the United States. It must then, they demanded with vigorous repetition, be altogether dropped, so that all might know with assurance that the rôle of France in Mexico after the ultimate success of her reinforced arms, would be to demand only reasonable guarantees for the security of her interests.⁴⁴

Such was the pronunciamiento of independent thought on the expedition, in midsummer, 1862. And it indicated three things: first, that the Maximilian rumor was accepted at its face value, and, second, that the Question to which the rumor had given rise was still unanswered, and, third, that that Question could not well be pressed till France had rewon the prestige lost at Guadaloupe. Independents therefore dropped its discussion for a time and addressed themselves to an older and equally pressing Question, that of Rome, which had just risen from the dead.

This which now served as a sort of political diversion first arose, as is well known, in 1849, when France, fearing Austria might abuse her victories in the Piedmont by interfering in Roman affairs, anticipated Austria by sending an expedition to Rome to crush the revolt there and occupy the city in favor of the Holy See. This expedition, which was strenuously opposed by Jules Favre, Quinet, and others, was a lively topic until the Coup of December First (1851) ended for ten years

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* And as for the Opposition in the Corps, Favre, its great leader, opposed the vote of moneys needed for expeditionary reinforcements only to the extent that it should be "un vote de salut et non de confiance." (*Débats*, 28 juin, 1862.)

all free discussion in the Corps. It was revived in the press in 1859 when serious disturbances in Italy caused Napoleon III to send a new expedition to Rome, and again in 1860, when Piedmont troops invaded the Pontifical States and threatened the capital. More attention was drawn to it the following year when Cavour stopped Garibaldi, then taking his first step on Rome. The statesman was as eager as the warrior to extinguish the Temporal Power and make Rome Italy's capital. But he did not agree that that end was to be gained by marching in the face of a French garrison, and after he halted the Expedition of the Thousand he strove to show how best to reach the objective less dangerously. But no success met his demonstration, and the French still mounted guard in the Eternal City when death overtook him in June, 1861.

Garibaldi, after his failure, retired to Caprera. Here he continued to nurse the thought that violence was superior to diplomacy, and planned his second step on Rome. His plans were no secret to the Royal Government, which apparently would offer no obstacles to a second attempt. And so encouraged, he sailed suddenly into Palermo, in June, 1862, and began the recruitment of the several thousand who sailed the Straits late in August, the same year, shouting "O Roma o morte!"

The French press had irregularly noticed Garibaldi's movements since March, 1862. Independents, of course, were in sympathy; and even *Le Constitutionnel* seemed not adverse, for it filled its columns with strings of figures to show that the occupation of Rome was a charge too heavy for the Budget. But it was only after the news of Guadeloupe had brought a lull in the Mexican debate that Garibaldi and the Roman Question came into full prominence. This was especially the case after August 3, when the Royal Government formally disavowed Garibaldi's acts and ordered him stopped. Its order was obeyed, and the second step on Rome ended at

Aspromonte, August 29, when its wounded leader was placed under arrest.⁴⁵

The abrupt end of this attempt vexed the Liberal press, which spent the next six weeks calling upon the Empire to withdraw its troops from Rome, and so end the Roman Question before it exposed France as well as Italy to the most serious perils. The disturbance in the press, none the less, soon abated after the announcement of the Foreign Office that France, in any negotiations concerning Rome, would confine herself to the reconciliation of "the two interests equally deserving of respect, and would not hear of sacrificing one to the other."⁴⁶

During the Roman clamor, thus ended, one newspaper casualty occurred. But it was not very serious, for it took the form of an "avertissement." The sufferer was *Le Courrier du dimanche* which, it was charged, endeavored to incite hatred of the Government in an article blaming the Empire for great inconsistency "in that it goes into the heart of Mexico, braving the cruellest maladies, and incurring the heaviest expenses, to propagate universal suffrage, while it refuses to listen to its voice at Rome."⁴⁷

And while other organs were thus wrestling with the Roman Question, *La France*, "The Journal of the Empress," having the field quite to itself, published a long article, whitewashing the Mexican muddle. It tried to persuade people that the Mexican expedition was a very good, and, indeed, a very useful business. In its opinion this exploit was as important as those of Crimea and Italy.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Shocking news, according to *Débats* (1 septembre, 1862) which begins a front page column describing the commotion excited at Paris (August 31) as follows: "Garibaldi est blessé! Garibaldi est vaincu! Garibaldi est pris! Comment cela s'est-il fait? L'événement est-il certain? On n'entendait pas hier à Paris d'autres conversations. La surprise, il faut l'avouer, était universelle."

⁴⁶ *Le Constitutionnel* whose slogan thruout the Roman debate was "réconciliation, le but de notre occupation," gave constant indication that this would be the outcome.

⁴⁷ *Le Courrier*, quoted without date; *London Times*, October 13, 1862.

⁴⁸ Quoted without date, *ibid.*, September 9, 1862.

To the Crimea we went to help Turkey defend her threatened independence, and to make Russia recede from her policy of invasion. We went to Italy to restore a great people to itself, and to deliver the Peninsula from Austrian influence and invasion. And we are in Mexico to enfranchise a nation worthy of universal sympathy and which groans under the most odious tyranny, and, at the same time, by the organization of a stable government placed under our powerful patronage, we say to North America, 'You shall go no further!' . . . For has not France the sublime privilege and mission that every act she accomplishes serves directly and indirectly the cause of progress and civilization?

Two other Imperialist organs, the *Revue Contemporaine* and *Le Constitutionnel*, not to be outdone, took up the defiant note sounded by *La France*. The former ⁴⁹ saw in the intervention which it termed a "fait accompli irrévocable" nothing more nor less than a struggle between the political influence of France and that of the United States, "a struggle," it said, "that is the inevitable consequence of the rupture of the great American Union, which put an end to the 'status quo' maintained between Europe and America since 1824." The *Revue* added:

From that epoch Europe had more or less renounced either its political influence or its colonial possessions on the American Continent; and the waxing greatness of the United States, giving a formidable support to the Monroe Doctrine, Europe had remained a stranger to the quarrels of America just as America remained a stranger to the dissensions of Europe.

The rupture of the American Union, the *Revue* insisted, "whether provisional or definitive," was an event of incalculable and universal importance, and as to its consequent, namely, the French expedition, it would have its readers to understand that only one question was important. This was: In what manner and in what sense ought the expedition be conducted so as to produce happy and lasting results? All other questions were idle anxieties.⁵⁰

I shall not illustrate the defiant statements of *Le Constitutionnel*, but only the reaction one of its boasts at this time drew from a leading Independent. The Imperialist, in its

⁴⁹ Octobre, 1862.

⁵⁰ This candid attitude toward the expedition is conspicuous by its absence in other Imperialist organs.

desire to rank the expedition among the noblest of human events, had ventured the prophecy that it would make the Mexican people "a great people." This, of course, was too good to let pass, and *L'Opinion Nationale*⁵¹ replied asking if *Le Constitutionnel* had the recipe "for producing on any spot, at will, great virtues, great characters, and great talents, which are the elements of great peoples." And *L'Opinion* further asked "on bended knees" that if it had, that *Le Constitutionnel* apply its invention to France, "where," it observed, "we do not remark that these heavenly gifts are distributed so plentifully as to enable us to export without inconvenience a portion to Mexico." Parryings of this type continued intermittently as the year 1862 drew to a close.

That initial year of the Mexican Question did not pass without the appearance of a few polemical writings on the expedition. The "best sellers" among these were perhaps Bazancourt's "Present Day Mexico,"⁵² and Edgar Quinet's "Expedition of Mexico,"⁵³ The first is a good-sized volume; 388 pages, two-thirds of which are given to a history of Mexico, from 1519 to 1861, with special reference to the anarchy, the disorders, and the treaty violations of the 19th century. These its author confidently believed gave more than sufficient explanation for the French intervention. The remainder of its pages, the section from which the work properly claims its title, glorified the expedition, and defended it against all those who did "not judge the question from an elevated point of view nor with impartiality."⁵⁴ Its notice of the Almonte affair is interesting:

The protection accorded General Almonte by the French troops, protection which alone saved him from certain death, was not, we repeat, the cause of the rupture of the nations who were allied but not united. It was only a pretext for that break, which had indeed been foreseen for some time. . . . In the eyes of France whose flag has never abandoned exiles, the protection constituted, in no way, an intervention in the internal affairs (of Mexico).⁵⁵

⁵¹ Quoted without date, *London Times*, November 8, 1862.

⁵² Baron de Banzancourt, *Le Mexique Contemporain*, Paris, 1862.

⁵³ Edgar Quinet, *L'Expédition du Mexique*, Londres, 1862.

⁵⁴ Bazancourt, p. 386.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 369-370, 382.

The true cause of the break, Bazancourt found in "English antipathy to the military action insisted on by France as indispensable, and in Spanish jealousy of the preponderance given France by her superior numbers."⁵⁶ Readers of *Le Constitutionnel* could have learned little that was new from the perusal of "Present Day Mexico." But it was perhaps not issued for such, but rather for the many others who had not read M. Limayrac's⁵⁷ series on the intervention.

"The Expedition of Mexico" contains but thirty-nine pages, and so cannot properly be called a book. Nor is it a mere brochure. It is an explosion; a bursting forth of "wrathful rhetoric" against the "esprit bonapartiste" that "seeks to realize the chimera of a great napoleonic empire across the Atlantic."⁵⁸ "In 1781," Quinet begins, "France put foot in America to help it free itself. . . . That expedition opened a new epoch, and brought back liberty to the Old World. Now, in 1862, France has debarked anew; but this time to do violence."⁵⁹ The following summarizes, largely in his own words, the development of the last phrase of this theme:

Reader, stop your ears to the 'grands mots' by which Bonapartism conceals the true object of the Mexican expedition, and learn its awful secret from one fact alone; the American civil war. That war is the occasion of the expedition of Mexico, which is Bonapartism's one chance to recoup the fortune lost in 1812. And once established on the plateau of Mexico, it will have at its feet not the kingdoms but the republics of an entire world. 'These,' it says, 'shall all fall.' First, those to the South; Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Montevideo, and Buenos Aires shall disappear one after the other. Thus, at last, shall the Spanish expedition of 1823 have its desired complement; and the standard of December Second shall be planted on the Cordilleras. Then we shall look to the North. The United States, the hope of the friends of freedom in the two Worlds, must be destroyed, for, left standing, it would only be a scandal and a menace to the Bonapartist edifice. Under the title of 'Latins' we invaded Mexico, but for the subversion of North American liberty it will be changed to 'friends.' From Mexico the hand can be easily extended to Texas and the Slave States, victorious since spring; and an alliance with these will assure the wished-for destruction.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 385.

⁵⁷ M. Limayrac was editor of that journal during the period of the expedition.

⁵⁸ Quinet, Introduction.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 11-19.

Such, in the fertile imagination of Edgar Quinet, was the Mexican expedition. For him it was as much "a blow against the liberty of the human race"⁶¹ as the Coup of December Second was against that of France. But his picture was not all shadows. He rejoiced at the successful resistance of Juarez, which gave him hope that America would not be "décembrisée";⁶² and he warned the interventionists that there were "aussi en Amérique des Baylen!"⁶³

From what has been so far said, it must appear that the Question paramount in France in 1862 was that of Mexico. And it could hardly have been otherwise; for the words of this Question formed, among others, the startling sentences: Are French troops in Mexico for what rumor proclaims? Is French blood to be spilled and French treasure wasted to found an empire for a foreigner? Is France to expose herself to the danger of a rupture with the United States by the installation of an ephemeral monarchy?

To these questions Independents in the Chamber and in the press, some half and others wholly believing the monarchical rumor, all answered "Yes," and begged the Government to halt before it was too late. Imperialists, for sundry reasons, lacked uniformity of reply. One Minister termed the Question "a sad commentary on French patriotism" and in replying to it with ridicule gave his answer the effect of a denial. Another regretting "the misunderstanding" that led to the Question, said "No." But he was then talking as a diplomat of the Talleyrand school. The official journal avoided the Question, but the inspired press, although devoting most of their attention to the work of glorifying the Mexican exploit, found time to answer both "Yes" and "No."

The Emperor ignored the Question till late in the year when a letter of his to General Lorencez,⁶⁴ published in *Le*

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 38.

⁶² Ibid., p. 26.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 22.

⁶⁴ Who had failed before Puebla, and was later replaced by the better known leader, Marshal Forey.

Constitutionnel,⁶⁵ stated that it was "against his principles, interests, and origin to impose any government on the Mexican people, which may choose in all liberty that which suits it best. I ask," he added, "only sincerity in its relations with foreigners, and I desire but one thing; the prosperity and independence of that fine country under a stable government." Giving these words their most favorable interpretation, they might be considered an Imperial "No" to the Mexican Question. Yet they hardly deserved this generosity, for they left ample room for the Mexican monarchy which the next year saw rise out of rumor into reality.

⁶⁵ September 18, 1862. A copy of this issue was sent Secretary Seward by Minister Dayton, and it appears, therefore, in the Diplomatic Correspondence (1862, part 1, pp. 400-401).

CHAPTER III

OPPOSITION TO MAXIMILIAN'S INSTALLATION AS EMPEROR OF MEXICO

"But Ferdinand Max and Charlotte were too deeply enmeshed in the idea of the Empire beyond the seas. Nothing could avail to check the rolling stone."—COUNT CORTI.

The Emperor's letter to General Lorencez caused people to expect that his speech opening the session of 1863 might contain some reassuring phrases on Mexico and the expedition. That discourse was delivered on January 12, and reported by the inspired press as loudly applauded in the Corps and profoundly satisfactory and impressive everywhere. The Corps, indeed, applauded the Orator, who none the less disappointed all who sought enlightenment on the problems of the Empire. Nor could the issue have been otherwise; for the Imperial remarks did not form the customary exposé of the state of the realm. Rather were they, in the main, a harmless review of the most important events of the previous five years; and, thus, too much devoted to the glorification of past deeds, and too little attentive to current and vital problems, they satisfied and impressed none except adulatory Imperialists.

On the Mexican expedition the Emperor was extremely brief. A dull allusion¹ was his sole offering on that subject, which was dismissed with such swiftness that one had his choice of two explanations of the Imperial haste; either the Mexican business was a thing too trifling for serious attention or it was an ugly matter, and the less said about it the better. The latter conclusion, doubtless, appeared the more logical to the disappointed, and *Le Temps*,² as if desirous of comforting these, said, in its comment on the passing allusion that "it would be unjust to expect in a speech of twenty min-

¹ "Enfin des expéditions en Chine, en Cochinchine, et au Mexique prouvent qu'il n'y a pas de contrée si lointaine où une atteinte portée à l'honneur de la France demeure impunie." (*Annales*, 1863, tome i, p. 3.)

² January 14, 1863; quoted *London Times*, January 17, 1863.

utes duration those explanations on the state of the Empire, which the speaking Ministers will soon give." This was irony.³ No newspaper looked for less explanation from Ministers than *Le Temps*. Other Independents abstained from comment or limited themselves to expressing the general disappointment, and asked again what was to be the political conclusion after the triumph of French arms in Mexico.⁴ This inconvenient question, however, was not pressed; for there had suddenly risen, on the Continent itself, a more absorbing problem, which, fraught with the danger of a general war, challenged the urgent and full attention of all.

In January, 1863,⁵ a nation that the Treaty of Paris had wholly ignored, and which had fallen into political oblivion, suddenly rose to prominence, and threatened a European conflagration in consequence of a revolt that has been termed "the most senseless, hopeless, and heroic rising of modern times." The Rising of 1863 that portended "to leave Poland only her soil, her water, and her sky," was not viewed thus coldly by contemporaries. It was the day of "nationalities," and nothing done in that name was accounted either as senseless or as hopeless. From the hour that the Polish explosion was precipitated by *Veliopolski's* strange policy the sympathy of all Western Europe was with the insurgents. Free peoples did not limit their sympathy to words, for relief funds for the Revolution were speedily opened in most countries; nor to the purse, for in the two nations where the "principle of nationalities" was an article of political faith, France and Italy, young men slipped away to fight for Poland.

Nowhere, perhaps, did the attempt to kidnap the Polish

³ And for it *Le Temps* suffered an "avertissement."

⁴ One critic which rarely passed over anything of lively interest reserved its comment until the appearance of the *Exposé de la Situation de l'Empire*, which, it said, "glisse sur l'expédition comme le discours impérial. Rien n'est moins explicite que les expressions par lesquelles on définit le but de la guerre engagée au delà de l'Atlantique." (*Débats*, 14 janvier, 1863.) *La Patrie* (14 janvier) which, as usual discovered "un véritable accent de patriotisme et du génie politique" in the speech, explained its rapid allusions as "réserve," and "cette réserve," it added, "est toute une leçon à l'adresse des partis."

⁵ On the 22nd.

Opposition give rise to more bitter ire than in France. After news of the Revolt was received late in January,⁶ interest in all other foreign questions dwindled, and became almost nil⁷ in February, when William I threw four army corps along his eastern frontiers and induced Alexander to abandon all effort to conciliate the rebels. After that, Frenchmen seemed to have little thought for anything but Poland; then the American civil war that so worried French producers; and the Question of Rome that had so long occupied Ultramontanes and Liberals; and that of Mexico that puzzled everybody—all were forgotten in French execration of Prussia. What was the great apostle of nationalities going to do about this serious Polish affair? Day after day the press propounded this absorbing Question. Conservatives saw proper and speedy solution in united diplomatic intervention on the part of the Great Powers; Liberals favored a diplomacy supported by the despatch of a French army to the Rhine frontier; Radicals⁸ were bellicose; a general European war seemed to these not too great a price to pay for Polish freedom.

For discussion on Mexico during those critical days one must turn to the *comptes-rendus* of the Corps where old questions only had due entrée. No Imperial allocution had yet envisaged the Rising of Poland or the burning Question attached to it. The Insurrection and its Problem, therefore, having no official existence, had small practical entity for French deputies. One thing only might properly engage their attention; the Address they were to vote in reply to the Speech of January 12. And, thus, while the outside world worried and troubled itself with the question of the hour, the Corps debated on the articles of its Reply.

⁶ On the 26th.

⁷ "Il n'y a qu'une question de politique extérieure aujourd'hui; c'est la question polonaise. Elle domine les esprits, elle passionne l'intérêt public et nous ne croyons pas lui donner trop de place dans nos colonnes en insérant toutes les nouvelles, dépêches ou correspondances qui permettent de suivre les moindres phases de l'héroïque insurrection qui tient encore les forces russes en échec." (*La Patrie*, 18 février, 1863.)

⁸ And even *La Patrie*; this Imperialist was on the side of the Radical *Le Siècle* and *Le Temps* thruout the duration of the Question.

The clause relating to Mexico came up for discussion, February 7, and this, accepting the intervention as an accomplished fact, and qualifying it as punitive, recommended its prosecution until the offending Mexican Government had been brought to a respect of treaties, and the honor of France redeemed by the triumph of French arms. To all whom the disaster of Guadeloupe had saddened this recommendation seemed honorable and acceptable. But among these Jules Favre and his four Radical colleagues were not to be numbered. The hostility of these to the expedition remained unmitigated, and they emphasized it anew in an amendment condemning it as ill-defined in purpose, contrary to all French interests, adventurous and rash.⁹

In presenting this, Favre delivered himself of a lengthy philippic that stripped the expedition of its tinsel and displayed it, as he saw it, an ignoble exploit in favor of the house of Jecker.¹⁰ The injection of the "Jecker bonds" into the discussion gave the Government's defender, M. Billault, a subject on which he fastened with alacrity. He, indeed, seemed to welcome Favre's charge as he proceeded "to prove, once for all that the Jecker credits have played not the least part either in the declaration of war or in the rupture of the armistice of La Soledad."¹¹ The summary of the speech in which the Minister offered his proof, which one listener said left the Jecker mystery more mysterious still,¹² need not occupy us; and it will suffice to consider only the words by which he closed his remarks. These were in substance; that altho there were, in Mexico, alongside the interests she went to defend, certain political tendencies, France no longer found it opportune to insist on these tendencies, and her sole purpose henceforth was the defense of her honor and interests.¹³

⁹ See *Annales*, 1863, tome i, p. 126.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 143-146.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

¹² *Paris Correspondent*, *London Times*, February 16, 1863.

¹³ See *Annales*, 1863, tome i, pp. 160-161. The Emperor was well pleased with Billault's speech, which was quickly used for foreign propaganda. "The *Moniteur* of this morning," wrote the American Minister, March 11, 1863, "says that a copy of this speech has been

Such was his parting shot at opponents who still brazenly asserted that Maximilian's throne as well as Jecker's bonds lay behind the expedition. He then descended the tribune amid a triple salvo of applause from the Corps, who finished the day by burying the Radical amendment, and adopting the proposed paragraph by a vote of 245 to 5.¹⁴ This was the response the Emperor expected from his Corps. But this Body was not yet done with the Mexican business. Moneys were needed for the success of the expedition whose continuance had been so cordially voted, and Minister Billault saw to it that the March debates on the Budget did not militate against the supplementary credits requested by the War Department for the Mexican exploit, whose force was raised to 34,000 in April. After these debates the Question of Mexico, in its political aspect, no longer disturbed the peace of the session, which was the last of the Corps elected in 1856.

That question, however, was destined to rise again to harass a new Minister¹⁵ and embarrass his Master; for it was not yet dead. But in the spring of 1863, with press opposition abstracted, and the Radicals in the Corps plainly crushed, there seemed little left to keep the issue alive. Interest in it, indeed, was moribund. It was not so, however, with the expedition as a purely military exploit. This drew increasing attention; for it was too costly a thing to suffer much neglect. Forty million francs up to March; such was the cost of the Mexican war according to conservative estimate. And, in truth, the Mexican war was hardly a war at all but rather an encampment on the shores of Mexico, thanks to General Forey whose dilatoriness became the object of sharp attack.

Three-quarters of a year had already passed since Forey

laid on the desk of each of the members of parliament. Two copies have been furnished me, one, at least, of which was doubtless intended for my government. . . ." (U. S. Dip. Cor., 1863, part 1, p. 648.)

¹⁴ 250 deputies voting. Therefore, did the Minister with good reason boast that "Heureusement en face des cinq voix isolées qui accusent la politique française se lève la France entière." (Annales, 1863, tome i, p. 161.)

¹⁵ M. Billault died in October, 1863.

landed at Vera Cruz,¹⁶ and despite the generous sums supporting him, and his very large army,¹⁷ he was as far away as ever from Mexico City. Since his relief of Lorencez, people said, Forey had done too little, and they asked why he had not done more; and some who knew a little of American history pointed to the fact that the American, General Scott, with not half the army of Forey, and with at least the same difficulties to overcome, had taken Vera Cruz and Jalapa, defeated Santa Anna at Cerro Gordo, and entered Mexico City, and signed a treaty of peace highly satisfactory to the United States; and all this within ten months. Was it, asked the critics, that the great Forey was less skilful and adventurous than Scott? This odious comment merited some reply. But there was little doubt about it; Forey's campaign was unsatisfactory, and Imperialists neglected its defense.¹⁸

What effect such criticism had on the Government I do not

¹⁶ Forey reached this port September 21, 1862, but due to bad landing conditions and fevers his forces did not move into the interior till the next month. (Bancroft, *History of Mexico*, VI, 56.)

¹⁷ He had at this time an effective of 30,000.

¹⁸ After the fall of Mexico City (June 7, 1863), a good part of a chapter was written in Forey's defence. The defender, a French officer and participant in the Mexican Campaign, in replying to the critics also made use of odious comparisons. In 1838, he says (I give merely the substance of his remarks), impregnable Vera Cruz fell under the blows of three French frigates, but in 1847 a whole American squadron preferred to blockade that port rather than brave the guns of Uloa, and Vera Cruz did not fall until an American army came by land to invest it. It, therefore, took the two together to do what three French ships had done within a few hours, and for this act the American press attacked its navy, which did not think it a duty to attempt again the dangerous solution of a problem, undertaken so boldly less than ten years before by a small division of French ships. . . . And, as to Scott's rapid march; that is easily explained. It was his fear of yellow fever that drove him inland with such speed where his army met a population, completely indifferent to the events that went on under their eyes, and, in consequence, a population offering no obstacle to the Americans, who, if they themselves were hardly an elite force, met a Mexican army, totally without energy, and so destroyed it. And if people will call our attention to the successes of such a force it is allowable to think that the elite corps of Forey ought not to encounter more difficulties in Mexico in that that corps knows how to conciliate the sympathies of the population in guaranteeing to it that which it has always lacked, namely, security of person and property. (Charles Martin, *Précis des événements de la Campagne du Mexique en 1862*, pp. 99-106.)

know; but it is probable that along with the reinforcements of March and April went orders commanding speedier action. Forey, at any rate, began to move, and not long after, *Le Moniteur*¹⁹ announced that the drive on Mexico City had been resumed with vigor; and *Le Constitutionnel*²⁰ that the Mexican populations were "acclaiming the liberating intervention of our advancing army." The advance was vigorous, but not rapid; and when June began, Puebla, where Lorencez had met his Waterloo, was still untaken; and as late as the 9th of that month the best the "Official Journal" could report was that the investment of that fortress (begun in March) was still going on vigorously.

This was not a wholly accurate report of affairs; for Puebla's defender, Ortega, had surrendered, and Forey had been in possession of the city since May 17. But to be "au courant" with remote events in those days was not possible; and it was not till June 10 that the joyful communiqué "Puebla est à nous!"²¹ was read at Paris amid the thunder of the cannon of the Invalides.

This despatch, presaging the imminent fall of the Mexican capital, came at a moment when the Government was in need of a stimulant. The general elections were in progress, and the outlook in some quarters was not too bright. Jules Ferry's story of this contest,²² an interesting and fair account of events, shows us the Government facing an entirely new situation in the election of 1863. Foreign events had little by little changed public opinion everywhere, and for the first time since the foundation of the Empire, the Majority in the Chamber was troubled and even wavering.²³ And the issue of the elections, displaying an increase of more than a million

¹⁹ 15 mai, 1863.

²⁰ 17 mai, 1863.

²¹ *Le Moniteur*, 11 juin, 1863.

²² *La Lutte Électorale en 1863*, the purpose of which was twofold; it aimed to expose the machinery by which the Government controlled the peasant vote, and to stir up the Liberals more effectively to combat a system that subjected the suffrage of the agricultural masses to the supervision of "gardes champêtres, maires," and other "roitelets du village."

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

votes in favor of the Emperor's opponents, who more than tripled their effective in the Corps,²⁴ showed that the anxiety of the Government was not altogether groundless. In such circumstances the good news from Mexico was an elixir to Imperialists.

The success of its expeditionary forces, however, brought the Government again face to face with the inconvenient question of political consequences, whose restatement the Emperor prevented by the spontaneous announcement that it was not the purpose of France to impose upon the Mexican people a government contrary to their wishes or to make French success a triumph of any party whatever.²⁵

This manoeuvre to keep down opposition was much favored by the assiduous attention Independent organs were still giving Poland. The engrossment and temper of these is well illustrated by the following from the *Débats*:²⁶

The electoral fight just ended could not be but a momentary diversion from the great question of European politics, and, today, interest returns, with more solicitude and vivacity than ever, to the Polish Question.

This was a happy circumstance for the Emperor, who was thereby given a freer hand both in laying the foundations of the Mexican monarchy and in preparing, as far as this was possible, public opinion for that event.

The conquest of public opinion, altho always in evidence,

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 107-108. The opposition polled but 660,000 votes in the last (1857) election, and elected but 5 deputies. In this 16 Republicans were sent to the Corps.

²⁵ In a congratulatory note to General Forey, published in *Le Moniteur*, June 15. As the American minister was specially interested in such announcements, the letter was translated, and appears, therefore, in the *Diplomatic Correspondence* (1863, part 1, pp. 674-675). The announcement, indeed, was nothing new. It had appeared twice before; first, in the Emperor's letter to Lorencez, after the disaster of Guadalupe, and a second time, in January, 1863, when *La Patrie* (17 janvier) published Imperial instructions given Forey, July 3, 1862, the eve of his departure for Vera Cruz. As there is nothing so necessary in propaganda as repetition it was urgent therefore to publish a third time the Emperor's "will" with respect to Mexico.

²⁶ 10 juin, 1863.

did not become intense till a fortnight after the fall of Mexico City had been announced.²⁷ Then the first act of the Government was to appoint a day when all France might with due solemnity and rejoicing celebrate the latest victories of French arms.²⁸ That day was August 15, the Feast of the Assumption in the calendar of the church, and of "St. Napoleon" in that of the Empire; and in either case an important national holiday.

For more than a week ahead the mairies prepared for the great day and on the 15th 33,000 communes²⁹ in unison celebrated the newest glories of the Empire. But it was at Paris that the day was most solemn and impressive. There the festivities and the pomp were such as to tax the descriptive power of Théophile Gautier. This official reporter says:

The morning was given over to grand Te Deums and military parades, and the afternoon to an open-air performance of a cantata entitled "Mexico," which in spite of the great heat of the day was attended by crowds that packed the spacious esplanade of the Invalides; and many who were unable or did not care to assist at the musical spectacle were entertained with pantomimes depicting the capture of Puebla which had all the realism of actual warfare with its volleys, hand-to-hand combats, and triumphal marches.³⁰

But the fête committee reserved its best for the night when, we are told, the sky above the Champ de Mars was made bright as day by fireworks scintillating a great "N impériale" in stars, flanked by "the glorious names of Puebla and Mexico."³¹

It was in the midst of this general rejoicing that the Government announced the birth of a new empire, in publishing thru its *Moniteur*³² the resolutions of the Mexican Assembly of Notables calling Maximilian to the throne. This was startling news after all the Government had said. But the Independent press seemed indifferent. Even *Le Mémorial Diplo-*

²⁷ Officially in *Le Moniteur*, July 11.

²⁸ By circular letter thru the Ministry of Justice and Public Worship (August 1); printed in *Le Moniteur*, 4 août, 1863.

²⁹ Ferry's figures; *La Lutte Électorale en 1863*, p. 90.

³⁰ *Le Moniteur*, 16 et 17 août, 1863 (combined Sunday and Monday editions).

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² 15 août, 1863.

matique's³³ announcement of the Archduke's positive acceptance failed to draw fire. Indeed, there was an instance of apparent volte-face. The *Débats*, at least, gave that impression in bitterly attacking the New York Herald for a report that the United States and Russia were to ask France to renounce the project of establishing a monarchy in Mexico.³⁴ This attack, however, did not mean that the Orleanist was won over to the Emperor's side. It meant rather that the interference of Russia was not to be tolerated even in objectionable matters.

Hostility toward Russia at this moment outweighed every other sentiment in France; and it is in this antipathy that the apathy³⁵ of Independents with respect to Mexico is to be explained. The attention of these to the Polish Question reached its high point in the autumn of 1863. Napoleon had just sent his second note of remonstrance, and the minds of all, fixed on Russia, anxiously awaited the issue, the pacific hoping for a favorable, the warlike wishing for an unfavorable reply. And the wish of these last seemed realized in Gortchakov's virile tho slow coming rejoinder. It was that Russia resented all foreign interference in her domestic concerns.³⁶ *L'Opinion Nationale* and *Le Siècle* termed this a fresh insult and clamored for war. The *Débats*,³⁷ too, was angered; this more moderate organ was not averse to France making herself the executive soldier of Europe in Poland just as she saw fit to become so in Mexico, even without England and Austria.

Thus again the big question rose high, this time looming up more than ever. What was France going to do about Poland?

³³ 16 août, 1863.

³⁴ Quoted London Times, August 26, 1863.

³⁵ The apathy was, of course, not absolute. The Independents gave a measure of attention to other foreign questions. But even when they discussed them their habit was like that attributed to *L'Opinion Nationale* in the following: "Chaque fois qu'elle parle du Mexique, *L'Opinion Nationale* songe à la Pologne et aux États-Unis. Elle tremble à la pensée que les exigences de notre expédition mexicaine pourraient détourner la France de cette guerre contre la Russie où les partis avancés cherchent à entraîner notre politique." (*La France*, 4 septembre, 1863.)

³⁶ See S. Platonov, *Histoire de la Russie*, p. 936.

³⁷ 24 septembre, 1863.

It was apparent that remonstrance with the Russians was futile; that the Polish problem must be solved by violence.³⁸ War clouds hung on the horizon. Everybody saw them; everybody except the Emperor.³⁹ Polish nationality, in his opinion was hardly worth a war; and it was his wish that diplomacy should still work the solution. But he was in no haste to inform France of his intention; and he had good reasons for this. Certain that nothing serious was to happen, he let the war cloud cast its shadow until he was ready to dissipate it; and meanwhile gave his attention to the last details of the capricious policy that had sent his troops across the Atlantic. Thus while the country waited for a war that was not to occur, a Mexican deputation, carrying an imperial crown, visited Miramar; and Napoleon and Maximilian corresponded and levelled out most of the obstacles bearing on the acceptance of that crown; and by their arrangements set the stage for the resumption of the domestic conflict on Mexico.

This was not immediate, at least in so far as it concerned the daily press, whose obsession with the Polish Question needed yet some time to be shaken off. Newspaper comment on the Discourse, inaugurating the new Corps and opening the session of 1863-1864, displayed that Question still dominating the columns. In that speech, delivered November 5, the Emperor touched rather fully both on Poland and Mexico; and of these two very important topics the former received his larger attention, as his remarks on it claimed that of the press.⁴⁰

³⁸ "Assez de dépêches," said *L'Opinion Nationale*, "assez de protocols, assez de phrases! Nous demandons des actes. Au nom de l'humanité outragée, de l'équilibre européen nous demandons au successeur de Napoléon Ier de relever le gant de la Russie; nous demandons la guerre." (Quoted, *La France*, 3 octobre, 1863.) This, too, was the cry of *Le Siècle*, *Le Temps*, and even of the Imperialist *La Patrie*.

³⁹ And *La France*, which preached and predicted what ultimately occurred.

⁴⁰ The *Débats* (6 novembre, 1863), for example, while lengthy on the Russian paragraphs of the speech, has hardly more than a sentence on the Mexican.

The announcement that the Polish matter was too large for France's sole handling, and was, out of respect for Russia's dignity, to be referred to a European conference, where it would be treated together with other questions troubling Europe,⁴¹ drew from the newspapers according to their temper, expressions of satisfaction or surprise. Among the organs displaying the latter sentiment were, naturally, *L'Opinion Nationale* and *Le Siècle*. The surprise and disappointment of these, at the pacific tenor of the Imperial remarks on Poland, did not readily discourage their bellicose aim, and war with Russia continued to be their sole objective, and Poland their principal preoccupation.⁴²

The other important Imperial announcement that "the force of things unforeseen and not to be regretted," made it imperative that the French army should occupy Mexico until the destinies of that country could be handed to "a prince whose enlightenment and high qualities make him worthy of that noble mission,"⁴³—this left the Russophobes undisturbed.

But if these abstracted opponents of Imperial Mexican policy were thus unheeding, Mexico's champions in the Corps were not. Maximilian's installation was still only a project; and these hoping yet to defeat or at least seriously to obstruct it, made ready to launch a last and vigorous assault to that end when the Address with its Mexican paragraph came up for discussion; some then to challenge the assertion that the project was an event brought about by unforeseen circumstances, and others to question the wisdom of the Imperial solution of the Mexican Question. Thus it happened that the war against the Mexican policy of Napoleon III was resumed where it first began; in the arena of the Chamber. The first phase of this new conflict will next occupy our attention. Yet before attending to its story, it will be useful to take at least a glance at the Imperialist propaganda of the year now ending.

⁴¹ See *Annales*, sess., 1863-1864, tome Ier, p. 5.

⁴² *La France*, 8 novembre, 1863.

⁴³ *Annales*, sess., 1863-1864, tome Ier, p. 4.

Poland did not distract Imperialist editors and scribes to the extent it did their opponents. The expedition, even in its gloomiest days, continued to hold a prominent place in their columns. It was certainly not the pleasantest subject in the spring of 1863, but they held to it none the less, putting the best face on matters until the Puebla success⁴⁴ made it convenient to tell the whole truth. In advertising that victory, *La France* and *Le Constitutionnel* could not restrain themselves from blazing away at their opponents, branding them without much new cause "des officines de fausses nouvelles" for their "lying rumors and malevolent assertions, which did not and could not discourage France from her purpose in going to Mexico which was like that for which she went to China, namely, to pursue a reparation."⁴⁵ After July, circumstances made it proper to change this tune, and when they had duly celebrated the fall of Mexico City, they set themselves to the task of justifying the "inevitable" political consequences of the victories.

Two prolix volumes,⁴⁶ published before the year closed, incorporated most of the arguments advanced in this effort. The installation of Mexican monarchy, according to these, was but an inevitable event in the political evolution of Mexico, which country the destiny of civilization had placed under the aegis of the French flag. Their authors follow, in general, the method used from the beginning of the expedition. In 1862, however, "the imperative necessity of responding to the will of the Mexican people"⁴⁷ was an inopportune phrase, and could not well be emphasized. Intervention solely for the reparation of just griefs was the term then in vogue, and Mexican history then recited to justify that type of interven-

⁴⁴ "fait d'armes qui sera dans l'histoire du second empire une date glorieuse de plus." (*Le Constitutionnel*, 12 juin, 1863.)

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ E. Muraour, *Le Mexique; Conquête du Mexique par Fernand Cortez, Guerre de l'Indépendance et République, Expédition Française au Mexique, 1861-1863*; Félix Ribère (Rédacteur du *Constitutionnel*), *Histoire de la Guerre du Mexique*. I attempt no summary of these prolixities, limiting myself to the briefest statement of their aim and method.

⁴⁷ A phrase now general with Imperialists.

tion. The "unlooked-for and unpremeditated circumstances" of 1863 led Imperialists no longer to attempt the justification of the intervention on the mere grounds of Mexican misdemeanors, altho these were by no means overlooked, but rather to explain the expedition as the predestined means by which Mexico had found deliverance from the "infinite"⁴⁸ number of bloody factions that oppressed her, and reached at last the highest point of her political happiness.

A provocative defense of the installation, unnoticed in these writings, appeared in the "Journal of the Empress." This was that France had not rescued Mexico from anarchy to abandon it to the ambition of the United States. This argument, coupled with an appeal for French recognition of the Southern Confederacy, as the logical and necessary complement of the intervention, was developed in a brochure⁴⁹ appearing about the same time. In this a prophecy of *L'Opinion Nationale* that the Mexican war would be a war without issue was assailed with a lengthy list of the fecund results that were to follow the installation. Principal among these were the definitive destruction of the American Union, the annihilation of the Monroe Doctrine, "a doctrine that is in essence only an insurance against civilization," the end of South America's absorption by Anglo-Saxons, and the beginning of the civilization and exploitation of that Continent by Latins.⁵⁰

An Orleanist chronicler, and constant partisan of the United States, could not let this attack on a time-honored international friendship pass unnoticed, and he replied with an article more hoping for than predicting the ultimate restoration of the Union, and also hazarded a list of consequences. These were the serious events France would find in store for her if her army were encamped in Mexico, sustaining a

⁴⁸ Muraour, p. 16.

⁴⁹ *La France, Le Mexique, et Les États Confédérés* (published anonymously). William Henry Hurlbut's *France, Mexico, and the Confederate States* is an American (Confederate(?)) translation of this. Hurlbut, a Southern journalist, was a guest of Maximilian in 1866.

⁵⁰ See *La France, Le Mexique et Les États Confédérés*, pp. 7, 9-10, 17, 24-25.

monarchy, when the American war ended. He did not know whether that would be soon or late, but he assured interventionists that at that hour the world would behold popular passions turn from Canada to Mexico, and the American presidency quickly fall to the party the most hostile to the new Mexican constitution, and this party, controlled by a multitude of idle generals, sure to survive the war, would insure by force of arms the triumph of the Monroe Doctrine.⁵¹ This writer, much absorbed with the question of French recognition of the Confederacy, dangerously close at the time, seemed more opposed to France's sustention than her installation of Mexican monarchy, and his article, therefore, cannot be considered a clear attack on that installation.⁵²

The distinction of having issued the first definite *caveat* against the Emperor's project belongs to a *Palais Bourbon* scribe, who, in a 31 page brochure,⁵³ opposed his own novel solution to this, but with such tact that Imperial susceptibilities could not have been greatly offended. The pamphlet recommended a plebiscite to settle the Mexican Question, and to better the chances for a hearing avoided all mention of the old rumor. Its writer admitted the justice of French intervention, and echoed the reparatory thesis of its organizers. But he warned the French Government, "while it prosecuted the redressment of 40 years' griefs and guarantees for the future,"⁵⁴ to be on its guard lest France become the dupe of the insidious clerico-Spanish party as it threatened to become in 1838, when according to Blanchard's history of that expedition that party committed outrages against France to lead her to destroy the republic which they hated and wished to supplant. That same party, he said, existed still, and should

⁵¹ See E. Forcade's *Chronique*, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 sept. 1863. An American, Vine Wright Kingsley, also replied, in a pamphlet, *French Intervention in America*, or rather, probably, to Hurlbut's translation. Kingsley (p. 8) accredited the authorship of the French pamphlet to M. Michel Chevalier, concerning whom, see below, p. 94.

⁵² The same may be said of Adolphe de Bellèyme's *La France et Le Mexique*, strangely recommended by *La France* (10 octobre, 1863).

⁵³ A Malespine, *Solution de La Question Mexicaine*.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-6.

the Government carry out the proposed installation, France must inevitably fall its victim.⁵⁵

In place of that absolute installation, he recommended the following settlement: An armistice was to be arranged with Juarez, during which his followers and their opponents, the Monarchists, should hold an election by which the whole Mexican population would be called upon to vote for the Empire, in accordance with the decision of the Assembly of the Notables, or for the maintenance of the Republic and the Constitution of 1857, both sides being pledged to accept the issue of the balloting as final. Whatever the result, it was argued, France would be sure to obtain the redressment of her grievances; for if the people pronounced in favor of Maximilian, he could ascend the throne without apprehension from the Juaristas, whose submission or departure from the country would end all serious opposition; and, if, on the contrary, Juarez were chosen, his selection would give him the moral force he was said to lack, and the Monarchists then perceiving that they could no longer depend on foreign intervention, would abandon their intrigues; and by either event, peace at last restored in Mexico, France could adjust all difficulties, and put an end to a costly intervention that not only threatened collision with the United States but also impeded the free disposition of French land and sea forces on what was perhaps the eve of a European conflict.⁵⁶

At the moment this solution was being run through the press the Corps was discussing a report of its Committee on Supplementary Credits, which announced that 60 million francs were needed for expenses not provided for in the Budget of 1863. This report⁵⁷ was drawn up by a Majority member, M. Larrabure, and it dwelt especially on the Mexican expedition, whose immense cost, it was observed, caused much disquiet in France. The reporter said:

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 14-31.

⁵⁷ Published in full in Annexes (tome Ier) to *Annales*, 1864, pp. 83-99; full title "Rapport fait au nom de la Commission chargée d'examiner le projet de loi relatif aux suppléments de crédits de l'exercice 1863, par M. Larrabure, député au Corps législatif."

This apprehension had been brought to the attention of the Ministers, called before the Committee for explanations, and among the questions put to these were the following: Amid the general disquiet of the country why was the French army sent to San Luis de Potosi? Was it necessary to send it there? What is the object in view? Do we intend to remain in Mexico? and, What are the chances of being paid the costs of the expedition?⁵⁸

The first three of these questions were answered to the apparent satisfaction of the Committee, who were informed that it was imperative to send the army to San Luis, as the conquest was being pushed in that direction "in order that Mexico might more easily choose its government, which would undoubtedly be a monarchy."⁵⁹ The reply to the fourth, that the end of the year 1864 would be the terminus of the expedition, was especially satisfactory. The answer to the fifth was, however, quite otherwise; for the Ministry, admitting its ignorance of the financial resources of Mexico, "which would be looked into," would not give a precise answer.⁶⁰ Of the other contents of this report nothing need be said, and in dismissing it I may state that it concluded by counselling the Corps to express a desire for peace on every possible occasion.⁶¹ But, as we shall presently see, this good advice went wholly unheeded with regard to the Mexican war.

That adventure was rather given a new lease of life by the vote succeeding the debates on the Mexican paragraph of the annual Reply. That paragraph introduced January 5,⁶² came up for discussion on the 26th. It read, in part, as follows:

The Legislative Body thinks with you, Sire, that the most wisely governed nations cannot always flatter themselves on escaping foreign complications. The distant expeditions of Mexico and China have disquieted many minds because of the sacrifices entailed. . . . We do not deny that they must inspire respect abroad for our fellow countrymen, and for the French flag, and that they may also extend our maritime commerce. But we shall be happy soon to witness the

⁵⁸ *Annales*, 1864, Annexes (tome Ier), p. 87.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 89. This counsel, needless to say, received, as it merited, the unqualified approval of both the *Débats* and *L'Opinion Nationale*; the latter, however, an unyielding Russophobe, deeply regretted that the report wholly ignored Poland.

⁶² *Le Moniteur*, 5 janvier, 1864.

realization of the good results which your Majesty leads us to hope for."⁸³

Two amendments had been prepared to supplant this specious pacifism with a more virile demand for peace. But before either of these were offered the great Thiers, just returned to the Chamber after a long exile, obtained the floor. He asked the parole, he said, before the reading of the amendment to which he had given his signature because he did not wish to discuss any particular amendment, but the very Mexican Question itself; for, he explained, if it were a mere matter of pronouncing a judgment on the past he would not bring up the matter, but rather, imitating business men who put certain affairs in the profit and loss account, he would cross the Mexican expedition off as a bad loss and think no more about it. But, he continued, this was possible only in the case of affairs whose costs were ended, and, unhappily, an expedition whose monthly cost to France was 12 million francs, he could hardly count as such. Nor was this great cost his sole consideration. There were, in addition, the forty-thousand French troops engaged in that exploit, 35-days sail from home, who were thus rendered useless to France, when complications in Europe might occur to demand the presence of every soldier. The reasons for all this he considered it now idle to ask; for a prince, called to the throne of Mexico, who was soon to cross Paris on his way to Vera Cruz, and the projected empire of that prince explained everything.

The orator then questioned the wisdom of that culmination of French intervention, while he recounted its oft-repeated story, neglecting none of the principal phases as he carried it down to the fall of Mexico City. That triumph, he insisted, should have fully satisfied French interests and honor. After it, France should have been willing to treat with Juarez, retaining only Tampico and Vera Cruz as security for the pay-

⁸³ *Annales*, 1864, tome iii, p. 308. MM. Thiers and Lambrecht had asked that this be amended to read: "*La Commission de l'Adresse regrette, elle aussi, les expéditions lointaines à cause des obligations et des sacrifices qu'elles entraînent.*" This amendment, however, was retired thru the Duc de Morny's influence. (See A. Darimon, *Le Tiers Parti sous l'Empire*, p. 105.)

ment of her claims, and have withdrawn in order to save a monthly expenditure of millions. As for the monarchical solution of the Mexican Question, that confounded his reason. Perhaps, he conceded, he had been educated in ideas too narrow to appreciate such great things; nevertheless, he added, such an enterprise in the current state of the world, and at such a distance, confounded all reason. Its chances of success were, to him, doubtful in the extreme; and granting that it might be successful, he asked what utility the empire would be for France, a consideration which ought always to be the end of all French enterprises. For his part, in fine, he looked for but one result, namely, the endangerment of relations between France and the United States where France had always found an immense field of commerce, which reached even to 500 million francs before the civil war, and where French nationals always enjoyed perfect security, which Mexico never assured. And, as for giving Mexico the beatitude of Brazil, he would remind Imperialists that that Empire even under prudent sovereigns had taken 50 years of uninterrupted tranquillity and friendly foreign relations to reach her praiseworthy position. Since Imperialists insisted, however, he would ask why they had waited until the Americans were at war to give Mexico that happiness. But he did not expect an answer to this question nor did he wish to lose time and waste words on the past. France, unhappily, was in Mexico, and the only important question, in his opinion, was not what she ought to do there but how she should leave there, now that her honor was avenged. It was said that France must not quit Mexico but with her interests safe. He wished her thus to depart, and considered the following plan as giving her that essential advantage. This was that the Corps should first vote against the chimerical project that did not satisfy a single great interest, and by this action render it easier for the Government to forswear that project by informing the Archduke Maximilian that the Corps did not approve of its assisting him as it meant to do. In that case the Archduke would probably decline going to Mexico, and France could

then honorably address herself to Juarez for the peaceful solution of all difficulties.

Thiers thus made the whole movement for peace hinge on the Corps; and he concluded, reminding that body that, if it encouraged the Government to go on, it could not afterwards, when asked, refuse troops and treasure for a policy whose ultimate end would be war with the Americans on the restoration of the Union.⁶⁴

This unpleasant prospect occupied the full attention of the next speaker, Antoine Berryer, the ablest lawyer in the Chamber, and perhaps in France. Fearful, as it were, that Thiers' prediction might leave unaffected a Corps that perhaps not only wished but expected the complete destruction of the American Union,⁶⁵ Berryer, amid many murmurs of denial and disapproval, strengthened it to read that, no matter how the American war terminated, the Northern States, "which would always remain a considerable and powerful state on the American continent," would resent the conduct of France in the affairs of Mexico. Those who denied this, he said, addressing himself to the murmurers, could do so only because they had not sufficiently studied both the documents under their eyes, and the historic facts that could not be denied. He did not mean, either, by this last remark, he said, "that deep sentiment, that vital principle which is the nerve of the political existence of the United States, namely, that sentiment called the Monroe Doctrine, that sentiment impatient and hostile with which the United States consider the intervention of every Power in the affairs of America." He meant

⁶⁴ I have tried, in these paragraphs, to summarize the very long report of Thiers' speech as given in *Le Moniteur* (27 janvier). As to the immediate effect of the oration, it might well have inspired hope among the enemies of the expedition; for according to the parenthesized comment of *Le Moniteur* there were "mouvements divers, applaudissements autour de l'orateur qui se rassied."

⁶⁵ Its sentiments towards the Union were all too well displayed in its rejection by a vote of 195 to 24 of the following republican amendment to the Address of 1865 (April 14): "We shall rejoice to witness the re-establishment of the powerful republic of the United States, the natural ally of France, and we shall hail with joy a triumph which has cost nothing to the cause of liberty." (Quoted, *Paps. Rel. to For. Aff.*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., part 2, pp. 279-280.)

rather, he said, "that spirit behind French intervention, a spirit which aims to diminish the influence and arrest the expansion of the United States." Thus Berryer continued until he felt he had given the Monroe Doctrine a strictly Northern tint, and made French policy in Mexico a special attack on the North, "which republic," he repeated, "will not tolerate the imperial monarchy of Mexico, and between whom and France war will break out sooner or later on the score of Mexican monarchy." Such in substance and in part was the speech⁶⁶ supporting an amendment embodying the solution propounded by Thiers.

As these two addresses occupied the whole sitting of January 26, it was not till the following day that the republicans were able to offer their amendment expressing grief that the Government persisted in the Mexican expedition, and demanding the immediate termination of "that ruinous enterprise." Jules Favre was its exponent-in-chief, and he was poorly assisted by a new member, Gérault, editor of *L'Opinion Nationale*. But their orations, demonstrating the incongruity between the Government's professions and its project with respect to Mexico, irked rather than convinced the Majority whose loud murmurings during the speeches made it more than apparent that the republican amendment was not to be a substitute for the vague and indecisive paragraph of the Address.⁶⁷ Nor was Thiers' solution to be that. And this brings us to the consideration of the Government's rejoinder, and the issue of the debate.

It might well be expected that Minister Rouher's reply at this important moment of the Mexican Question would be a masterpiece. But it was hardly that. Yet it was a fine demonstration of cleverness in a tight place. Rouher had come into the Corps undoubtedly well prepared to prove that the imperial project was a wholly unpremeditated and inevitable consequence of French successes in Mexico. He knew what to expect from Favre, and Picard, and others of the republican element; for their solution for the Mexican Question was

⁶⁶ See *Annales*, 1864, tome iii, pp. 305-306.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 307-311.

as patent and well-known as their assault on the expedition was constant. He was ready, and even eager to meet these foes, and he was confident of a successful issue. He was doubtless prepared to disparage the less offensive solution of Malespine's pamphlet. But he was not to meet that offered by the man the Emperor had tried by all means to keep from the Corps in the last election.⁶⁸

The speech of Thiers quite forced him into a corner; and he spent the day intervening it and his own rejoinder seeking a way out.⁶⁹ His reply more than proves this, for it half neglects the republicans as if their statements gave him little thought or worry; and it is in fact almost a personal attack on Thiers from whose logic Rouher after much trite declamation and prophesying at last found an escape in the following indignant phrases:—"Treat with Juarez, after our victory of Puebla! after our triumphal entry into Mexico City! when we are vainly pursuing the hordes of Juarist fugitives! That," he cried amid a thunder of applause, "would be to say to our nationals in the West Indies: 'Count no longer on the protection of France.' That would be to abandon the French to the cruelty of Juarez!"⁷⁰

This is sufficient illustration of the specious ire poured out in his speech; and I proceed to the issue. This, and most unhappily for France and the Archduke, was highly encouraging to the Government and the Emperor: for it was the Corps' rejection by a large vote of the salutary amendments,⁷¹

⁶⁸ Writing to Secretary Seward on the campaign of 1863, Minister Dayton gave special notice to this: "The Government," he wrote, "has its known candidates and instructs its prefects throughout the empire to support them and at the same time points out *officially* those whom it desires to defeat. It makes war most actively especially on Mr. Thiers. . . . If the opposition in the chambers shall be able to increase its number from five to fifteen or twenty it will be considered as a great triumph, more especially if Thiers should be elected as one of the number . . ." (U. S. Diplomatic Correspondence, 1863, part 1, p. 671.)

⁶⁹ See his remarks to the Duc de Morny, *Annales*, 1864, tome iii, p. 311.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 332.

⁷¹ By 199 to 47, according to Darimon (p. 274); both the *Annales* and *Le Moniteur* ignore the vote.

and its adoption by still a larger vote⁷² of the vague and pusillanimous paragraph of the Address. It was not, however, an absolute victory for the Government; for Thiers succeeded in sending thirty conservative members⁷³ over to the side of the inveterate foes of Imperial Mexican policy, so that not all conservatives may be said to have supported the Emperor in his installation of Mexican monarchy.

The unfortunate verdict, and the debate preceding it had at least one wholesome effect. It reawakened public interest in the Mexican Question. Thiers' speech was the talk of the day, and it highly merited the great praise rendered it by the Independent press which unanimously pronounced it the greatest speech on the Mexican Question. The inspired organs, of course, could not concede that; and one of them, *La France*, was severely indignant at his eloquence: "No," observed this paper, "we do not approve these retrospective criticisms of which the expedition is the object, even when they are formulated with the great expository talent possessed by M. Thiers, and the energetic eloquence of M. Berryer. We do not approve them because, when our flag is engaged, and our soldiers still fight and suffer, it is not right to say that they fight without purpose."⁷⁴

La Patrie admitted that Thiers, Berryer, and Favre were good enough orators. But they were nothing more. They were assuredly not prophets. It was amused at Thiers "who," it observed with irony, "announces in advance, the fall of the Emperor Maximilian. Does M. Thiers indeed know how to read the future? His past proves the contrary. The honorable deputy, as a matter of fact, predicts only that which he wishes; and that which he wishes cannot be that which Providence wishes; a fact which has very often come home to him."⁷⁵

Imperialists naturally preferred that all prediction respect-

⁷² By 201 to 47. See *Annales*, tome iii, p. 334.

⁷³ *L'Opinion Nationale*, (29 janvier, 1864) gives the list, which includes the names of dukes, marquis, counts, and viscounts together with those of extreme republicans.

⁷⁴ *La France*, 28 janvier, 1864.

⁷⁵ *La Patrie*, 29 janvier, 1864.

ing the Mexican empire should be made by themselves; and one of their chief organs, *Le Mémorial Diplomatique*, made such forecasting a specialty.⁷⁶ This weekly was generous in its attention to Thiers' speech, analysing it at length "to show its false arguments" and crowning its exposé with the confident prophecy that "the future would show that the installation of Maximilian not only served the highest interests of civilization but also constituted a most useful as well as a most generous act for France."⁷⁷ The Independents gave this boast small attention, and having warmly commended the speech to which it was a rejoinder, they neglected Mexico for a brief time to devote themselves to a new and pressing Continental interest.

For some weeks following the verdict in question the attention of Europe was attracted to events on the Danish peninsula where the future conqueror of the Empire was correcting in arrogant and high-handed fashion, a mistake made by the Danish General Council. That act of the Danish Constitution of 1863 incorporating the Duchy of Schleswig into the Danish kingdom was a clear breach of the London Protocol (1852). But it was not the prerogative of Prussia to penalize for the breach, and therefore was France interested, especially interested, and a Danish Question born.

What is to be the conduct of France in these circumstances? Is she to remain resigned and passive in the presence of the aggression of which Denmark is the victim? . . . Certainly, the treaty of 1852 does not impose on France the obligation of defending Denmark by force of arms and in the present state of her alliances, it would be imprudent and dangerous, were she for uncertain results to unite against herself the animosity of Germany. Yet French interests suffer from what is passing in the North. The Treaty of 1852 which gave Denmark security bears the signature of France; and in no case should the annulling of her signature by violence be regarded with indifference.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ "Notre tâche," said *Le Mémorial*, replying to an attack from *L'Opinion Nationale*, "consiste principalement à étudier les faits qui ont une importance internationale et diplomatique et de rechercher les conséquences qu'ils peuvent avoir pour l'avenir, pour le développement de la vie progressive de peuples et pour la paix du monde." (*Le Mémorial Diplomatique*, 31 janvier, 1864.)

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ E. Forcade, in "*Chronique de la quinzaine*," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 février, 1864.

The feeling expressed in this grew later into a desire for action. But nothing serious came of it. Queen Victoria forbade Palmerston to move against Prussia, and Napoleon had demonstrated conclusively during the Polish affair that he did not favor isolated action, at least on the Continent. Prussia's arrogance, therefore, instead of provoking a war, called forth rather a demand that France imitate the perfidy by tearing up that part of the Treaties of 1815 which delimited her Eastern frontier.

While this propaganda was at its height, and we need pay no more attention to it, for it passed without effect, Napoleon's imperial protégé visited Paris, much to the discomfort of the American minister,⁷⁹ to pay his respects and to discuss certain details connected with his definitive acceptance of the Mexican throne. The discussions, however, did not iron out every difficulty, and it was not till April 9, that Maximilian's acceptance became a certainty by the Treaty of Miramar, certain sections of which shall engage our attention later. It is sufficient to note here that the day following that Treaty he embarked for Vera Cruz.

This was a departure no European situation could cause to pass unnoticed; and Independents as well as Imperialists gave it due attention. The former, indeed, found in it small cause for rejoicing, altho one of them expressed feeble satisfaction at the Archduke's decision, saying that since Mexico was at last going to have a Government nothing, therefore, could oppose the return of the French forces to their homes,

⁷⁹ Despite the following instructions issued for his guidance: "You mention," wrote Seward, February 27, 1864, "that the Archduke Maximilian is expected. . . . If the Archduke appears in Paris only in his character of imperial prince of the house of Hapsburg, you will be expected to be neither demonstrative nor reserved in your deportment towards him. If he appears there with any assumption of political authority or title in Mexico, you will entirely refrain from intercourse with him. Should your proceedings become a subject of inquiry or remark use your discretion. . . . Say we acknowledge revolutions only by direction of the President, and until authorized have no formal or informal communications with political agents or representatives of revolutionary movements in countries with whom we maintain diplomatic relations. . . ." (U. S. Dip. Cor. 1864, part 3, p. 45.)

and that it would expect daily the announcement of their repatriation.⁸⁰

The inspired papers, very naturally, were highly elated at the departure, and made it the chief topic of their columns. *Le Constitutionnel* saw in it: "the happy return of Mexico to her traditional path, and the foundation of her true condition of order and prosperity without the least sacrifice of her independence."⁸¹ The same organ was conspicuously silent on the matter of the army's recall.

La France, however, which considered "the restoration of monarchy in the person of Maximilian a complete solution of the Mexican Question," proclaimed the task of France finished thereby, and announced that the army would return home "in succession, with the prestige of a fresh glory, and the consciousness of having performed one of the most considerable works of the age."⁸²

The *Journal of the Empress* was specially happy at the great honor the Empire would enjoy "in the face of history for having constituted alone and in spite of the desertion of our allies, and notwithstanding the perils of the undertaking, in the rich regions of Central America, an empire whose stability is important for the interest of the whole world."⁸³

La Patrie,⁸⁴ too, gave indications of an early recall of the expedition. In a very lengthy article on France in Mexico it observed:

Mexico to-day has a sovereign. The Archduke has put on the crown which he accepted the 3rd of October last. . . . Thus has been accomplished gradually by prudent and irresistible progress, the noble

⁸⁰ See *L'Opinion Nationale*, 8 avril, 1864. The departure, however, blackened the skies for another very much interested observer, Minister Dayton, who in his despatch notifying Seward of the event said: "I look upon this proceeding with intense anxiety. Nothing has occurred since my residence at this court which foreshadows future difficulties with France as its action in this matter. God grant that it may be long delayed, and if possible avoided; but I fear . . ." (*U. S. Dip. Cor.* 1864, part 3, pp. 67-68.)

⁸¹ Quoted, *Despatch No. 450*, *U. S. Dip. Cor.* 1864, part 3, pp. 71-72.

⁸² Quoted, *ibid.*, p. 72.

⁸³ Quoted, *ibid.*

⁸⁴ 12 avril, 1864.

enterprise pursued by France beyond the seas. . . . The Emperor, when he arrives in Mexico, will find the pacification of that country almost achieved; twenty-three provinces out of the twenty-five have already recognized his authority. . . . A part of our soldiers, therefore, are ready to return, and the rest will follow them in proportion to the needs of the remaining conquest.

It was this last sentence that pleased the most. But was it true? Time would show.

These extracts sufficiently illustrate the rejoicings of the Imperialists, who also found this moment of exultation most proper for the launching of a Mexican loan, the first emission of which calling for eighteen and one-half million francs was opened April 18.⁸⁵

It was rather early to ask such support for a throne whose formal inauguration was yet almost two months remote. The action, however, was taken no more betimes than that of both the domestic and foreign enemies of that throne. The latter of these, indeed, moved against the new Empire in March, expressing their antagonism in the following solemn resolution:

Be it resolved by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled; that the occupation of Mexico; or any part thereof by the Emperor of France; or by the person indicated by him as Emperor of Mexico, is an offense to the people of the United States of America.

And be it further resolved: that the movements of the government of France and the threatened movement of an Emperor improvised by the Emperor of France, demand, by this Republic, if insisted upon, war.⁸⁶

Of course, owing to the tact of the American President and his Secretary of State nothing serious resulted from this Jingo resolution. It was, however, formally offered, and was by the domestic opponents⁸⁷ of Imperial Mexican policy, who

⁸⁵ At Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, and in the departments at the banks of all the correspondents of the *Crédit Foncier* and *Crédit Mobilier*, and in foreign countries, at London, Amsterdam, Turin, and Brussels. See *Le Mémorial Diplomatique*, 24 avril, 1864.

⁸⁶ Senate resolution proposed by Mr. McDougall of California, in March, 1864; copied in Seward's despatch (No. 510) to Dayton; (*U. S. Dip. Cor.* 1864, part 3, pp. 56-57.)

⁸⁷ And also by the directors of that policy whose "extreme sensitiveness" on the Resolution could hardly have been altogether dissipated by Minister Dayton's reply to M. Drouyn de Lhuys that he "did not think France had a right to infer that we were about to

learned of it in April, considered a certain token that their scorned prediction that an American peril lurked in the shadow of Maximilian's throne was not without foundation.

The McDougall Resolution, in effect, consecrated that slogan, which became henceforth, until circumstances rendered it obsolete, their chief weapon against France's sustention of Maximilian. And its use was wide and general. One formidable opponent, indeed, who had never before stressed the American danger, in concluding, during the May debates on the Budget, his reply to a brilliant picture of Mexico's future drawn by the customary artist, M. Rouher, snatched and brandished the brighter and keener weapon. "If," said the speaker, "Maximilian can realize all the marvels pictured in the Minister's discourse we shall applaud, in spite of the sacrifices of France. But," he added, "I have grave doubts that the picture will become a reality." And what he wanted, he said, was realities, not romance. He wished the new Emperor every success, but he could not hope for the success of a man who was in reality only the protégé of France in a policy that would if persisted in, terminate in a conflict with the United States.⁸⁸ Thus Jules Favre, whose constant cry had been Jecker's bonds, dropped that cry to shout with Thiers and Berryer that the throne of Mexico would bring war with America.

This common cry played an important rôle in the new phase the Mexican Question now underwent. And it is this fresh turn of the Question that displays itself in the succeeding chapter, which brings the narrative down to December, 1865, when the Mexican Question, abruptly taken out of the hands of orators and scribes, and placed in its proper international sphere, received a definitive solution.

make war against her on account of anything in those resolutions." (Ibid., p. 76.)

⁸⁸ See *Annales*, 1864, tome vii, pp. 109-110.

CHAPTER IV

OPPOSITION TO THE PERILOUS SUPPORT OF MEXICAN MONARCHY

"Si l'expédition du Mexique était déjà une folie; quel nom donner à une guerre contre les États-Unis?"

Taxile Delord, *Histoire du Second Empire*, IV, 239-240.

In June, 1864, the world added another emperor to the long list of its rulers by the installation¹ of Maximilian at Mexico City. That capital's reception of the new emperor was courteous and favorable; and the Imperialists made much of this, broadly advertising it while they admired the new empire as the finest jewel of French foreign policy.

Short-sighted politicians, the new name for domestic opponents of that policy, were, however, quick to disagree, and a whole series of foreign relations underwent sharp review. French policy it was charged had effected nothing but the isolation of France, which was now the least protected of European Powers; and this by a total disregard for beneficial alliances, the sole protection of France in that unlike England she had no great navy and sea, and unlike Russia no snowy wastes to defend her. The critics were indignant at the passive rôle of spectator played by the Government during the late happenings in Poland and Denmark, "two nations, the one reconstructed and the other defended, which might have raised up barriers for France against Muscovite or Prussian attack." Going round the map they reached the Italian boot and shot another dart at "the passivity which had prevented the growth of the one European Power that would be France's sure ally in the event of a European war." And they finished the tour of the globe, in pointing to the latest monument of disastrous bungling; namely, the Mexican Empire, which they deplored more than all the other errors, "since it had singularly cooled the attachment of America, and destroyed the possibility of the sole alliance which re-

¹ On the 12th.

mained for France in case English aristocracy thought it useful to join a European alliance against her."²

Imperialists, however, were not much disturbed by this last loss so-called. Word had just reached France that Washington was menaced by Lee's splendid army; and one Imperialist, gladly commenting on this, made it an occasion of reply to the critics, saying that France now confidently expected the day when America would be for her neither an ally to be sought nor an enemy to be feared.³ The Official Journal, true to its course, kept clear of all controversy, and devoted itself to daily accounts on the following and other less provocative subjects: Mexico's progress under her new ruler; the gradual disappearance of Juarist resistance; and, the new political temper of her people. *Le Moniteur* paid special attention to the troops returning from Mexico, who in the beginning at least were dined and wined for their heroism and their share in introducing the blessings of civilization into benighted Mexico.⁴

The repatriated troops were but mere fractions of the army of occupation. But it was said that 10,000 troops would return in 1864, and another 10,000 the next spring; and in consequence, there was no serious complaint at the small groups now returning. Fresh detachments sent to Vera Cruz at the same time either as relief troops or as casualties to fill up vacancies caused by yellow fever did not receive any stressed notice. Nor did *Le Moniteur* emphasize any other inconvenient happenings, such as the Confederate reverses, news of which reached France in August. Sherman's devastating march from Chattanooga to Atlanta; Johnston's retreat; Farragut's capture of the South's finest and best fortified port; etc.,—these were not subjects Imperialists were greatly tempted to expatiate on; and they now satisfied themselves

² *L'Opinion Nationale*, 19 juillet, 1864.

³ See *Le Mémorial Diplomatique*, 31 juillet, 1864; and, it added, "Le nouvel empire mexicain si noblement inauguré par l'Empereur Maximilien Ier y gagnerait sans doute un ami et peut-être un allié; mais plutôt c'est lui-même qui avant peu sera en mesure de servir d'appui et de conseil et d'exemple aux États-Confédérés du Sud."

⁴ See *Paris Correspondent*, *London Times*, August 12, 1864.

with the wish, if not the hope, that such events would not affect the destinies of the Mexican Empire, which would doubtless receive American recognition.

This notion L'Opinion Nationale⁵ hastened to dispel. Quoting from the New York Times it said:

The Mexican Question stands always in the *status quo*. It is false to say that the Federal Government had ever dreamed of recognizing the Government of Maximilian; and even if the Mexican people rallied to the new regime, and it became a reality, the Washington Government would allow no other considerations to influence it than those which have guided it up to the present. It would admit the facts accomplished without turning from the Monroe Doctrine, so often badly interpreted.

The Imperialists had no desire to argue the point. For the moment it was more to their liking to carry on the account of the ever-increasing success of the new Mexican Constitution. The transformation of Mexico under this, according to all Imperialists, was little short of a miracle. The country was on the eve of a complete pacification. Progress everywhere raised its head. And the port of Vera Cruz, crowded with machinery arriving weekly from Europe, showed the confidence of capital in Mexico's future.

A constant foe of the new monarchy felt it sufficient reply to this propaganda to remind people that all the progress Mexico was showing was effected at an immense cost to France, who had needed two hundred and twenty-two millions of supplementary credits since 1860, the total of a constant increase of expenditures that absorbed the surplus of the imposts and obstructed the domestic development of France.⁶ But that the Imperial creation was worth all this; and that France would be amply repaid for her humanity was to be gathered from two Imperialist literary productions.⁷

⁵ 11 septembre, 1864; and to the idea of recognition the same organ (25 octobre, 1864) opposed a more positive announcement, "Le Président des États-Unis vient de reconnaître M. José Satero Rieto comme consul de la république mexicaine pour le port de San Francisco. Ce fait prouve que le gouvernement fédéral n'a pas cessé d'être en relation officielle avec le gouvernement constitutionnel du Mexique."

⁶ See *Revue des Deux Mondes*, novembre 15, 1864.

⁷ Gabriel Ferry de Bellemare, *Les Révolutions du Mexique*; La Question Mexicaine et La Colonisation Française (Anonymous).

The first of these professed to give people "a correct appreciation of what was being done in Mexico, and help them judge soundly on the future of the country under the Monarchy."⁸ Its picture of Mexico under the Republic is honest; and confiding readers could not have failed to agree with the writer⁹ of its preface, that no people had made a worse use of its independence than Mexico "which unable to comprehend the benefits of liberty, was always abused by men of state too ignorant to teach it those benefits."¹⁰ No one, indeed, could deplore the passing of that régime of ignorance and abuse; and as the advent of the Empire had, according to the same writer, effected that passing, no one could regret the part played by France in Mexico's regeneration, which, it was emphasized, was a work of humanity that would benefit not only France but all the world besides.

The other article of propaganda made of "regenerated" Mexico a sort of safety valve. "Why," asked its author, "was 1688 the date of England's last revolution?" There was, of course, but one answer, his own; that England's colonies had drawn off the disinherited and unprivileged classes, the revolutionary element, by offering them an opportunity of creating a career without completely expatriating and placing themselves under obedience to new governments, religions, and political ideas. In the certain opinion of this French expansionist, such a safety-valve was what France had lacked; and it was by this so-called want that he explained the French revolutions of the preceding seventy-five years, "excesses", he observed, "that among other things have contrived to give a false impression of French temperament."¹¹ He saw in the new Empire, however, something more than this. The new Mexico, he dared say, would become for France what India was to England, without the expenses of government, and thus serve as an outlet for

⁸ Ferry de Bellemare, Preface.

⁹ George Sand.

¹⁰ Ferry de Bellemare, Preface.

¹¹ See *La Question Mexicaine et La Colonisation Française*, pp. 1-7.

French manufactures while it offered careers to ambitious and unemployed spirits.¹²

For those who might not be attracted by the sombre contents of the former, or by the extravagant fancies of the latter publication, a more weighty volume soon appeared. This,¹³ notwithstanding its title, was a scholarly guess at the economic future of Mexico; and coming from the pen of one of the leading French economists of the day, it was considered an important book on the subject. It was written with all the dignity people expected from Michel Chevalier, who aimed to prove that all complaints against the expedition were unjust; and that the new Monarchy must redound to the advantage of France. About one-half the book was devoted to the history of Mexico from the Conquest to the end of the Republic, and the summary of his rather prolix account of that long period need not occupy us. Enough to say that like all Imperialist historians of Mexico he gave special attention to the Republican period, vividly describing the struggles of factions and the disorders that "France was at length compelled to terminate by force and to replace by a constitutional monarchy."

To this new creation and its economic future M. Chevalier devoted the second half of his book. He was confident of its durability and success, and hoped to inspire in his readers a like confidence, picturing her limitless agricultural and mineral wealth, under the "regenerating" influence of the Empire, making Mexico the center of a vast trade and commerce, and her ports, in contact with all parts of the world, receiving immigrants carrying with them new ideas and new knowledge, infusing into the nation a new character, its best assurance of continued progress and peace.

Such was the happy forecast on the new Mexico made by a recognized scholar. It was a colorful picture whose realization every Frenchman might cordially wish. But one drab fact dimmed much of its lustre. An immense French army corps was still in Mexico as the third year of the expedition drew to a close engaged in a man-hunt against the dispersed

¹² See *ibid.*, p. 30.

¹³ Michel Chevalier, *Le Mexique, Ancien et Moderne*.

opponents of the Empire, and this was no cause for glory but for complaint.

It had been promised, as observed above, that 10,000 troops would return in 1864, but the year closed without that repatriation being anything like accomplished. Explanations on that point were asked for, but without effect. The questioners, however, were not to be silenced; and complaints against the detention of the Mexican forces increased as the new year commenced, making it prudent for the Emperor to take personal cognizance of them in his Throne Speech.¹⁴

In this he offered the following fable in an attempt to hush all lamentation:

In Mexico the new throne is being consolidated; the country pacified; and its immense resources developed; the happy effects of the valor of our troops, of the good sense of the Mexican population, and of the intelligence and energy of the Sovereign. . . . Thus all our expeditions touch their end; our land forces have evacuated China, our army in Africa is to be reduced, and that of Mexico is already returning to France.¹⁵

This Imperial notice gave some satisfaction¹⁶ but it did not and hardly could end the question of the withdrawal. As long as the French army was on Mexican soil there existed the danger that the expedition might end in contention with the United States. This was a deplorable possibility which every foe of Imperial Mexican policy wished to avert without delay, and not the least among these were the Radical deputies, who met in March to draw up their fourth successive amendment demanding the recall of the expeditionary army. This they offered during the discussion of the Address in April. It failed, however, to win the suffrage of the "membres

¹⁴ Delivered, February 15, 1865.

¹⁵ *Annales*, 1865, tome i, p. 3.

¹⁶ Taking the Imperial remarks at their face value, and expecting immediate evacuation, *L'Opinion Nationale* (17 février, 1865) said: "Nous félicitons le gouvernement de n'avoir épousé que dans un sentiment de modération un conseil qui lui eût été dicté plus tard par la prudence, et qu'il n'eût accepter qu'à regret le jour où les événements eussent paru lui forcer la main." Unfortunately, the felicitation was undeserved; for the French army was to tarry long enough in Mexico to transform into bitter reality the deplorable possibility believed by *L'Opinion Nationale* to have been now prevented.

flootants", who supported a like amendment in March, 1864.

The reason for this change of camp—for it certainly was that—on the part of these Conservatives will be vainly sought in their mild oratory against a "long-protracted war with the Juarists"; and I know of no other explanation for their action than that given Secretary Seward by the American minister, Bigelow,¹⁷ that the Mexican policy of the Government more than any other was in need of the unqualified support of the Corps, and received that support, on request, from all but the republican deputies.¹⁸

The non-adhesion of their erstwhile allies, however, did not lessen the zeal of the amendment orators, Favre and Picard. The speech of the former was, perhaps, his best on the question. It opened with a blasting review of the Government's propaganda on the pacification of Mexico, the flagrant contradictions of which Favre exposed by reading various extracts from *Le Moniteur*. It was a very damaging assault; for among the reports of the *Official Journal* the following inconsistencies, according to Favre's extracts, were to be found.

In January, 1864, according to the *Official*, the pacification of Mexico was complete, with only a débris of isolated Juarists resisting the Empire; and thruout the same year *Le Moniteur*, from time to time, reported little change in the situation. In 1865, however, Favre vigorously pointed out, the same organ had gainsaid all this in reporting a big battle at Oajaca in which 179 cannon, 1400 horses, and 4000 troops were taken. Nor was this all. A more recent report in *Le Moniteur* announced the state of Mexico's pacification to be such that the commander-in-chief of the expeditionary forces had been compelled to take over the direction of the operations in person!

Favre said he was unwilling to waste too much time in demonstrating how little official reports were trustworthy. Rather was he more interested in getting the French army out

¹⁷ Minister Dayton died in December, 1864.

¹⁸ See *Papers Relating to Foreign Affairs*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., part 2, p. 257.

of Mexico, that country pacified or not. And he stated his reasons for this in a picture of the peril that faced France in supporting Maximilian's throne with her bayonets, "an imprudence whose magnitude would be learned the day the American civil war let loose its hordes." It was not Jules Favre's wont to plead with the Imperialist Corps. He preferred by far to thunder at the marionettes.¹⁹ But on this occasion he pleaded calling upon them to avoid complications with America by voting the immediate recall of the Mexican army, which, he concluded, was not the wish of the Opposition alone, but of all France.²⁰

An immediate reply to this was made by a special orator for the Government, M. Corta,²¹ whose mission it was to prepare the way for a new Mexican loan. Corta ridiculed the idea of an American peril. He was happy, he said, as one who had just been in Mexico, and knew conditions there at first hand, to say that the Mexican people entertained no such fears as those expressed by the Opposition, and, he added, that the Mexican people differed in opinion with M. Favre because they judged their situation without prejudice. Their thoughts as a matter of fact were hardly given to such matters. They were altogether confident of the future, and thought mainly of the development of their country now made safe from anarchy by France. His main task was not the refutation of the Opposition's opinions; it was to advertise the wealth and

¹⁹ I use this term not in flippancy; they seem to deserve it, tho their condition was not of their own choosing, according to the following from the *Revue de l'Année* (1862):—"Describing the session of 1862, it said: "Le gouvernement fut constamment défendu par deux hommes d'état, deux orateurs qui ne manquaient ni de dévouement, ni d'expérience, ni de souplesse, mais qui montrèrent à peu près seuls sur la brèche. Parmi ses nombreux amis; à peine quelques-uns osèrent le soutenir autrement que par des applaudissements ou des exclamations brèves et enthousiastes. On semblait leur demander des votes plutôt que des discours, ses adhésions plutôt que des conseils. Partagés entre le double soin de bien interpréter le mot d'ordre et de bien exécuter leur mandat, ils craignirent de s'avancer trop ou trop peu, très bien façonnés aux habitudes des précédentes sessions, ils ne l'étaient pas encore au régime nouveau." This description applies to the majority till the fall of the Empire.

²⁰ See *Le Moniteur*, 11 avril, 1865; *Annales*, 1865, tome iii, pp. 114-117.

²¹ Who spoke at two séances (April 10 and 11).

resources of Mexico, and he did this in a lengthy discourse, in which he drew a glowing picture of that country's approaching economic revolution under the beneficent auspices of steam which would be henceforth the only kind of revolution possible under the Empire. Needless to say, M. Corta finished his addresses, which might serve as a verbal summary of Chevalier's book, amid the applause of the Majority.²²

Favre's colleague, Emile Picard, who spoke next, but with unlike effect, applied some daubs to Corta's tableau, which left him, he said, unconvinced that Mexico was pacified and ripe for so much prosperity. And to M. Corta's authority he opposed the greater authority of Marshal Forey, who only a few weeks²³ before in an address to the Senate had said that everything was yet to be done in Mexico, and that not only was the country not pacified but that a French army was actually on the way to the conquest of Sonora. Before he ended his distasteful speech, Picard observed that he did not too much blame M. Corta for passing over these facts; for he said they could hardly be of help at a moment when Maximilian and his Government were about to make a second appeal for French capital and credit.²⁴

The agreement or disagreement of a mere handful of Radicals was a negligible factor to Minister Rouher whose rejoinder closed the debates. In his long exordium he reviewed the now worn story of the expedition, whose punitive character was no longer emphasized. The Minister now found it more useful to stress the exploit in its pacifist and regenerative aspects; and, having done this to the satisfaction of the majority, he took up the charge, made by Picard as well as Favre, that *Le Moniteur* had given out false news concerning Mexico's pacification. This was, in his opinion, ridiculous, and lacking all foundation. The Official Journal, he said, had published with scruple and fidelity all political and military news, and for his part he did not know of a single case of

²² See *Le Moniteur*, 11-12 avril, 1865; *Annales*, 1865, tome iii, pp. 117-122, 138-140.

²³ March 18.

²⁴ See *Le Moniteur*, 12 avril, 1865; *Annales*, 1865, tome iii, pp. 140-148.

omission or intent to deceive; and when, indeed, he wished to obtain correct information on the state of the expedition he had never failed to get it from *Le Moniteur*. All this organ had informed him was that the expedition had pacified in a serious way the whole center of Mexico, but that a notable part of the provinces of the north, far outside the action of the French corps, was still in the hands of the enemies of the Empire. He had further learned from the same trustworthy paper that where good government reigned Mexico was happy and progressive; and this was a most remarkable transformation of that country, when he considered the quickness with which it had been accomplished.²⁵

Such observations were thought by him a sufficient refutation of Favre's charge. Rouher next passed to the principal duty of the hour; namely, that of saying a good word for the coming Mexican loan.²⁶ Not only did he admire, he said, the remarkable results of the expedition, but he also looked forward to greater things under the high direction of the Emperor Maximilian, who would assure a veritable prosperity to the finances of the Empire and incontestable guarantees to those who loaned it their money, tho, he added quickly, his statement was not to be taken as a guarantee of responsibility on the part of the Government, which neither directly nor indirectly offered any guarantees in connection with the coming loan. It was not his office, he emphasized, to give any such guarantees, but only to give the public the facts of the Mexican expedition, leaving it to them to decide their own loans.²⁷ He, none the less, assumed some responsibility in warning bond purchasers to stop their ears to the allegations of irresponsible persons who tried to alarm them with respect

²⁵ See *Le Moniteur*, 12 avril, 1865; *Annales*, 1865, tome iii, pp. 149-156.

²⁶ Calling for 170 million francs. "Donnons," remarked one ironical commentator on this, "donnons au Mexique de l'argent, s'il en a besoin pour se faire une existence indépendante . . . mais n'aliénons pas indéfiniment à son service notre armée. . . . Si le succès de l'emprunt mexicain doit hâter le retour de nos troupes puisse-t-il réussir et avancer la conclusion de cet épisode excentrique de la politique française!" (*L'Opinion Nationale*, 18 avril, 1865.)

²⁷ See *Le Moniteur*, 12 avril, 1865; *Annales*, 1865, tome iii, p. 152.

to Mexico.²⁸ This, said almost in the next sentence, was an imprudence, as we shall see hereafter, that cost the Government several million francs.

On the question of the recall of the troops the Minister was not too clear. He could, he said, see no reason for complaint on that score; for 8000 troops had already returned, and the Government, he would assure the Corps, would remain faithful to its promises. What these specifically were he did not take the trouble to state. And on the American peril, all that he cared to say was that the Government entertained no fears. He concluded his long speech with a blast against the Radical amendment, denouncing it as iniquitous,²⁹ and informing its proponents that the French troops would not return from Mexico "at the hour fixed by them or by Juarez, who encouraged by the reports which reach him from France, says to himself: 'I will harass them, and I will cause the troops to be returned to France'."³⁰ The Minister was here interrupted by Favre for the inference that the Opposition was in communication with Juarez, and after debating for a moment the objection, he abruptly ended his remarks with the announcement that France had conquered a great country for civilization, where she did not run the least risk, and whence her troops ought not to return to the metropolis until their object had been attained and they had triumphed over all the difficulties encountered.³¹ And there was, in fine, little more to say, as the issue of the debates speedily proved.

This was that the Majority responding, as pointed out, to the Imperial request and to the Ministerial wrath, swamped the Opposition amendment by a vote of 226 to 16,³² thus

²⁸ See *ibid.*

²⁹ His exact words and the Amendment were: "Et maintenant j'arrive à l'amendement, 'Au Mexique, nous déplorons plus que jamais le sang versé pour un prince étranger, la souveraineté nationale méconnue, l'avenir de notre politique mal engagé. Conformément aux déclarations du gouvernement nous attendons le rappel de nos troupes.' Voilà les idées de l'opposition . . . il faudrait un grand courage pour que la majorité commette l'iniquité d'adopter un pareil amendement."

³⁰ *Annales*, 1865, tome iii, p. 156.

³¹ See *ibid.*

³² See *ibid.*

according another lease of life to an exploit which had given France small glory thruout four costly years, and which was at length to humiliate her largely in consequence of a débâcle occurring across the Atlantic while this vote was being taken.

The fourth successive rejection of their amendment was without visible effect on the fighting spirit of the Radicals, who were now, as a result of the above noted defection, the sole opponents of the Mexican policy in the Chamber. They were as active as ever in the June debates on the Budget. But again their assault was beaten back by the Minister, who, predicting anew a bright future for the Mexican Empire, took occasion to render homage "to the disposition truly loyal in which the United States (now at peace since late April) comprehends and practices neutrality."³³ This was his comment on an American despatch giving assurances that the recruitment for Juarez on American soil, protested against by France, would be stopped.

This despatch, in the opinion of Imperialists,³⁴ and in the intention of the Minister was an annihilating rejoinder to those "speculators without conscience" who had time after time predicted that peace in America would bring destruction to Maximilian's Empire and lead to war with France on account of that Empire. The Minister's optimistic interpretation of the American note was very far from correct, as he was most painfully to learn. His opponents, happily, were not altogether right, but their predictions were to prove close enough to consequences to save them from the stigma of false prophets. To merit that unenviable name was the

³³ *L'Opinion Nationale* (compte-rendu du sénat et du corps), 11 juin, 1865.

³⁴ It was specially pleasing to *Le Mémorial Diplomatique*, "parce que," it said (28 mai, 1865), "depuis huit jours de bruits alarmants propagés par des spéculateurs sans conscience s'efforçaient de jeter le trouble dans les esprits, l'incertitude dans le pays, en présence comme inévitable au nom de la doctrine de Monroë, l'intervention des États-Unis dans les affaires du Mexique." Peace in America, *Le Mémorial* continued, would not affect matters for "Loin," it said, "de vouloir menacer le Mexique . . . le gouvernement de Washington ne peut qu'en redouter l'annexion, qui accroîtrait singulièrement l'influence des États du Sud et leur permettrait tôt ou tard de recommencer la lutte."

destiny of M. Rouher. All his speeches on Mexico gave him clear title to it, and none perhaps better than the speech he now delivered the extravagance of which need not be illustrated.

I need only say that his words on this occasion, for all their extravagance, were doubtless his most sincere and confident on the subject of the expedition. Up till now he had, as Minister Bigelow put it, "made the most of the conciliatory tone taken by American representatives in reference to the future of the President's policy toward foreign states in the western hemisphere."³⁵ His bold prophecies had all been founded on wishes rather than on hopes. But now, in consequence of an unwarranted interpretation of a despatch, he could repeat them not only hopeful but even confident that they would be realized. His speech, therefore, accomplished the desired result, for believing with him that there was nothing now seriously to obstruct the future of the Emperor's trans-Atlantic creation, a Corps that had refused nothing in the past cheerfully granted, by a vote of 232 to 13, the three millions in supplementary credits asked for the crowning work of the expedition.³⁶

This new generosity to the Government called for new proofs that Mexico's pacification was progressing toward ultimate completion. In consequence, official reports began to show a steady trend toward that end. In late June, to offer some illustration of this, *La Patrie*³⁷ reported the surrender of a whole Mexican army under General Corona, and four rebel centers (Mazatlan, Coasala, Culiacan, and Anaboa), to the expeditionary forces. July reports were still better. On the 9th of this month, *Le Constitutionnel* announced the sweeping advance of the army to be such that the "physiognomy of Mexico was taking on day after day an almost French aspect". The same paper on the 14th located the seat of war to be "now 1000 miles from the capital."

³⁵ Papers Relating to Foreign Affairs, 39th Cong., 1st sess., part 2, pp. 257-258.

³⁶ Exact figures, 3,718,801 francs; *L'Opinion Nationale*, 10-11 juin, 1865.

³⁷ June 20, 1865; quoted *London Times*, June 22, 1865.

And so the story went on, from day to day until the Débats,³⁸ exasperated by victories without end and issue, broke out:

We always register the successes of our troops with a lively sentiment of national self-love, but we cannot help pointing out that the war which is always on the verge of ending does not in reality end. It may be allowed to us therefore to await with patience the announcement of the definitive success that shall be the crowning of the expedition and shall allow our troops so often victorious to return to France.

Communiqués in *Le Constitutionnel*,³⁹ that the most complete tranquillity reigned in Mexico, might perhaps have given Débats, and others reason to think their hopes realized, were not the notices qualified in their conclusion by the phrase "except in a few outlying places." That damaging qualification, however, signified to all who had followed official reports, that the end of the Mexican war was yet far remote. And *L'Opinion Nationale* was convinced that it could not end but in the wholesale destruction of the Mexican population whose indefatigable resistance it attempted to illustrate in a uniquely attractive manner.

In the section of this paper given to serial novels there appeared daily during September and October, 1865,⁴⁰ a well written romance entitled *Les Rancheros*. Its author was a Frenchman who claimed 20-years residence in Mexico, and a perfect knowledge of its people and language. Its purpose was to answer the calumnies written of Mexico by Imperialist writers thru an enlightened and unprejudiced portrayal of the character of the Mexican masses, the successful conquest of whom, said the writer, must be a synonym for their complete extermination. His choice of the Mexican war of 1846 as the basis of the novel was hardly favorable to this aim, yet he glided past what difficulties this offered, and his portrait of the "rancheros" was one to captivate the average reader. For it was a glowing picture of the peculiar patriotism of the great mass of the Mexican people, who lived in the midst of vast solitudes, wholly immune from the vices of

³⁸ Quoted without date *London Times*, August 12, 1865.

³⁹ 1, 2 septembre, 1865.

⁴⁰ 21 septembre, 1865—28 octobre, 1865.

cities and completely indifferent to all political revolutions and pronunciamientos, and who never participated in war unless it were brought to Mexico by the invading foreigner. Against this invader they needed no call to take up arms, and, it was stressed, thus taken up they never dropped them till death snatched them from their hands.

Such, according to *Les Rancheros*, was the mettle of the Mexican people. It was, indeed, not unlike that of the peasants of France. A startling revelation, after all Imperialists had said and written. But, alas, if news received from Mexico in late autumn were to be believed the "rancheros" no longer practised the virtue manifested in the "forties"; for they "had once for all," said *Le Mémorial Diplomatique*,⁴¹ "accepted the Imperial Constitution, and forsaken Juarez, who had crossed the border at El Paso, thus relieving the Government of Maximilian of its last embarrassment and leaving it wholly free to devote itself to the reconstruction of the country now at peace."

Nor was this "communiqué" the sole delectation for Imperialists. That Maximilian's Government was most certain to remain unmolested by America was to be gathered from the following extract of an utterance of President Johnson, copied by the *Moniteur*:⁴²

Our policy (said the President speaking at a reception to a new Brazilian envoy to America) is simple and easy to comprehend. We wish to aid in the progress of civilization in this hemisphere. . . . In place of weakening the young States in our vicinity, we wish to give them strength, in placing in them a generous confidence, rather than letting ourselves envy their possessions or seek quarrels with them on the manner in which they conduct their governments. We wish, above all, to impress the American nations with the necessity of conserving their independence, and of keeping themselves on a perfect level with all the other peoples of the earth.

Le Moniteur said it would not go so far as to interpret these words as "a complete renunciation of the Monroe Doctrine but as a wise and rational interpretation of the famous message of 1823, which rejects all idea of American intervention in the internal affairs of America."⁴³ And the Official

⁴¹ 5 novembre, 1865.

⁴³ *Le Moniteur*, 16 octobre, 1865.

⁴² 16 octobre, 1865.

Journal probably believed itself in this; for before a week had passed it was predicting with confidence American recognition, "in the near future," of Maximilian's empire.⁴⁴

Judging from these reassuring reports, the situation for Imperialists was a happy one in November, 1865. But it was only momentarily so; for all this fine optimism was suddenly dissipated by the following fragment of President Johnson's First Annual Message,⁴⁵ news of which came to France December 15:—

From the moment of the establishment of our free Constitution the civilized world has been convulsed by revolutions in the interests of democracy or of monarchy, but through all those revolutions the United States have wisely and firmly refused to become propagandists of republicanism. It is the only government suited to our condition; but we have never sought to impose it on others, and we have consistently followed the advice of Washington to recommend it only by the careful preservation and prudent use of the blessing. During all the intervening period the policy of European powers and of the United States has, on the whole, been harmonious. Twice, indeed, rumors of the invasion of some parts of America in the interests of monarchy have prevailed; twice my predecessors have had occasion to announce the views of this nation in respect to such interference. On both occasions the remonstrance of the United States was respected from a deep conviction on the part of European governments that the system of noninterference and mutual abstinence from propagandism was the true rule for the two hemispheres. Since those times we have advanced in wealth and power, but we retain the same purpose to leave the nations of Europe to choose their own dynasties and form their own systems of government. This consistent moderation may justly demand a corresponding moderation. We should regard it as a great calamity to ourselves, to the cause of good government, and to the peace of the world, should any European power challenge the American people, as it were, to the defense of republicanism against foreign interference. We cannot foresee and are unwilling to consider what opportunities might present themselves, what combinations might offer to protect ourselves against designs inimical to our form of government. The United States desire to act in the future as they have ever acted heretofore; they never will be driven from that course but by the aggression of European powers, and we rely on the wisdom and justice of those powers to respect the system of noninterference which has so long been sanctioned by time, and which by its good results has approved itself to both continents.

⁴⁴ L'Opinion générale (22 octobre, 1865) est que très-prochainement le Cabinet de Washington abandonnera son rôle de neutralité pour reconnaître l'Empereur Maximilien et recevoir son ambassadeur.

⁴⁵ December 4, 1865.

The correspondence between the United States and France in reference to questions which have become subjects of discussion between the two Governments will at a proper time be laid before Congress.⁴⁶

Here were words well-calculated to disturb the optimism of the Empire builders; for the intimate relationship of these two paragraphs, readily noted by most of the Paris press, made it disagreeably clear that all was not well with the Mexican experiment.

Disquiet, anger, misrepresentation, such terms fairly express the reaction of Imperialists. Ultramontane *Le Monde*⁴⁷ found the President's remarks rather unsettling, and the "generalities" he expressed an evident proof that there was something going on at Washington or Paris relative to the Mexican Question. "One does not," it knowingly observed, "speak so briefly of an expedition which operates at his very door, contrary to his proclaimed principles, unless there is something under the cards which it is desirable to hide."

*Le Constitutionnel*⁴⁸ was wrathful at paragraphs "doubtless written with the sole object of giving some satisfaction to that overexcited portion of the American public, who derive their political views from newspapers which have at all times made a trade of exciting public curiosity by means of sensational rumors." And despite this remark showing well that it grasped the whole implication of his words, the same organ was "unable to appreciate what President Johnson could mean; for it knew of no European nation against which American citizens might one day be called upon to defend their institutions" adding that "one, indeed, would seek in vain to discover which of the nations of Europe have ever conceived the thought of interfering in the internal affairs of the United States." Its ire and flagrant misreading mixed poorly, and demonstrated even better than *Le Monde's* candor that President Johnson's phrases were readily appreciable.

⁴⁶ James D. Richardson (compiler) *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, VIII, 3566-3567.

⁴⁷ December 19, 1865, quoted, *Papers Relating to Mexican Affairs*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., H. Ex. Doc. No. 93, pp. 12-13.

⁴⁸ December 17, 1865, quoted, *ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

La France ⁴⁹ gave the Message two or three days' study before it ventured to speak. This paper also found the document a propitiation offered to "a certain current of opinion in North America on the matter of doctrines which flatter popular instincts there." La France, however, gave little vent to angry sentiment and limited itself to a calm attempt to show that "this new formulation of the Monroe Doctrine" had no reference to French policy in Mexico.⁵⁰

The reaction of the Opposition was altogether to be expected. These were elated to give the correct meaning to the fragment in question. *L'Epoque* observed,⁵¹

The Message for any one who can read is a declaration very clear, very firm, although very moderate, of the will of the Government of the United States to maintain its traditional policy, in other words to sustain the Monroe Doctrine.

And on the phrase, "should any European power challenge the American people as it were, to the defense of republicanism against foreign interference" the same Liberal continued:

This is not the language of a man who wishes to satisfy rancors and achieve an easy popularity by flattering the bad instincts of national vanity. It is the grave utterance of the most authoritative representative of a people, who wish not to embroil themselves needlessly but who are resolved not to see compromised, in any case, a liberty so well conquered, so dearly preserved, and to which it owes its happiness and strength.

The Message evoked from two other representative Opposition sheets, the *Orleanist Débats*, and the Liberal *Le Siècle*, short essays on the Monroe Doctrine, the former concluding its offering with the unwelcome advice that "in the present state of the world, it were better for the generous, expansive, and often disinterested genius of France which inclines to proselytism, to recognize that in the spread of liberal ideas America seems called to a superiority which it will be easier to balance than to oppose."⁵² And "Why," asked *Le Siècle* in closing its exposition, "should we be astonished if the American people be faithful to their institutions, and declare

⁴⁹ *La France* (17 décembre, 1865), merely gave a summary of the Message without comment.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 20 décembre, 1865.

⁵¹ December 19, 1865, quoted, *Papers Relating to Mexican Affairs*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., H. Ex. Doc. No. 93, pp. 8-10.

⁵² *Débats*, December 18, 1865, quoted, *Papers Relating to Mexican Affairs*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., H. Ex. Doc. No. 93, pp. 6-7.

themselves willing to make every sacrifice to maintain them? This sentiment has no need of the name of any man; it is known throughout all time, and is everywhere known by the same name, Patriotism.”⁵³

The reaction of the Official Journal manifested both hesitation and concern. On December 16, it half-admitted the handwriting on the wall, in its curt notice on the Message, which, it said, “affirms in a general manner the Monroe Doctrine.”⁵⁴ It offered no further comment of its own⁵⁵ till the 20th, when attempting to take the bull by the horns, it asserted that the Message contained nothing irreconcilable with the policy followed by France in Mexico.

This was, however, only the statement of an opinion whose converse, so to speak, had been iterated time and time again against the domestic opponents of that policy. No need to state that converse. It has been given repeatedly. Nor is it necessary to say that it failed utterly of its object, which was to put to silence by its mere assertion, as if it were some intuitive truth, the rancorous voice of the Opposition.

There is but one thing more to state, in concluding this chapter. It is that this utterance of *Le Moniteur*, which was not issued against domestic enemies, gave sure indication that a new conflict on Mexico had begun. And in this conflict the opponents were altogether different and more important persons than those who have faced each other thus far.

It is with this new strife on the Mexican policy and these new opponents that the following chapter will deal, but not wholly to the neglect of the old foes who have borne the brunt of a long struggle. These now for a time will play the rôle of spectator, but not a passive one; for they will take sides in the new struggle and thus retain a fraction of our attention.

⁵³ *Le Siècle*, December 19, 1865, quoted *ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

⁵⁴ *Le Moniteur*, 16 décembre, 1865.

⁵⁵ In its issue of December 18, in addition to giving a translation of the Message, in full, it quoted the *Morning Post* (London) (December 16) as declaring “que tout le monde reste dans le vague le plus absolu sur la question de savoir si l'établissement d'un empire au sud de la vaste république doit être considéré comme une intervention étrangère”.

CHAPTER V

THE MEXICAN QUESTION BECOMES AN INTERNATIONAL QUESTION

"Napoléon n'était pas maître d'agir autrement en présence des sommations de plus en plus pressantes des États-Unis."

Delord, *Histoire du Second Empire*.

Mexico, for reasons noted at the end of the preceding chapter and for others presently to be pointed out, painfully occupied the thoughts of Napoleon III as the year 1865 merged with the past. Events had ruthlessly transformed the highly advertised Mexican exploit into a great blunder. He doubtless realized this at the beginning of 1866 but he was unwilling, naturally, to admit it. He rather preferred still to proclaim it a progressive success, so progressive, indeed, that he was relieved from further active support. In his Throne Speech, January 22, he said:

In Mexico the government founded by the will of the people is becoming consolidated. The dissidents, vanquished and dispersed, have no longer any leader. The national troops have displayed their valor and the country has found guarantees of order and security which have developed its resources and raised its commerce with France alone from 21 to 77 million francs.¹

And from this fiction he deduced the following as a consequence:

Thus as I expressed the hope last year, the expedition touches its end, and I am arranging with the Emperor Maximilian to fix the time for the recall of the French troops in order that their return may be effected without compromising the French interests which we went to defend in that distant country.²

And he concluded his remarks on Mexico by observing:

The uneasiness produced in the United States by the presence of our army on Mexican soil will be appeased by the frankness of our declarations, and the American people will comprehend that our expedition in which we invited them to participate was not opposed

¹ *Annales*, 1866, tome i, p. 3.

² *Ibid.*

to their interests, and that two nations equally jealous of their independence ought to avoid any step which would implicate their dignity and honor.³

It is not necessary to stress that this language holding out hopes of an early release of France from her Mexican entanglement was hailed with great satisfaction from every angle. The *Débats*⁴ found very noteworthy "the pacific tenor" of the Emperor's words and called special attention to "the exhortation addressed to the United States."⁵ *L'Opinion Nationale*⁶ found the Speech "extremely pacific" and altho overjoyed with the announcement on the recall of the troops from Mexico it would like nevertheless "to have found in it a few words that might serve as a basis for calculating approximately the date of the recall."

As for the inspired press, *Le Constitutionnel*⁷ hardly knew how to express its pleasure at an address "which treats every important question, foreign and domestic, with that clearness which is the happiest form of good sense, and which is above all a French quality." The inspiration of this last phrase was probably *Le Constitutionnel's* professed difficulty with President Johnson's Message. *La France*⁸ too experienced a joy beyond words. "The Discourse," it said, "is one of the most important of the reign;" and "on the delicate Question of Mexico," it observed with solemnity, "the Emperor realizes the wish of the country, which is the recall of the troops without disavowal of the object of the expedition." *Le Mémorial Diplomatique* extracted a singular lesson from the Imperial remarks, finding in them a conclusive proof of

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ 23 janvier, 1866.

⁵ "Ce qui achève," it said, "de donner à cette déclaration (the evacuation announcement) une portée décisive c'est l'exhortation indirecte adressée immédiatement après aux états-Unis, s'il en est temps encore, qu'ils ne compliquent notre situation au Mexique par quelque démarche inopportune."

⁶ 24 janvier, 1866.

⁷ 23 janvier, 1866.

⁸ 24 janvier, 1866.

its forecast, oft-repeated against adversaries, that no complications would result from the expedition.⁹

The Emperor was pleased with the favorable reception of his Speech by the press, and he was anxious that it should please the United States.¹⁰ Its happy effect in France, however, was short-lived. In less than a week after its delivery, Mexican affairs appeared suddenly alarming, and optimism quickly fading, France fell a prey to the wildest rumors, and a sort of solicitude which the American minister said was compared in his presence to that which prevailed in 1789.¹¹

The explanation for this sudden reverse is found in the January 25 and 27 issues of such papers as reprinted from New York and London papers portions of the French and American exchanges promised the American Congress, December 4, and submitted later, by President Johnson. Some of these exchanges were specially disturbing. From one, an American despatch,¹² dated December 16, 1865, people learned that the American minister, instructed by the American Secretary of State, had informed the French Government that, despite the serious wish of America to cultivate the friendship of France, that policy would be imperiled if France did not judge it conformable with her interests and honor to abstain from continuing the intervention of her army in Mexico for the purpose of overthrowing the republican government there, and of establishing on its ruins a foreign monarchy, which the United States would not recognize at any price.

⁹ "On voit maintenant," it said gravely, "combien nos prévisions, déduites de l'observation impartiale des faits, étaient exactes." (*Le Mémorial Diplomatique*, 28 janvier, 1866.)

¹⁰ In his despatch (No. 255), February 1, 1866, Minister Bigelow wrote: "In the diplomatic circle last night at the palace the Emperor asked me how my country people would like his speech. . . . He said that he hoped that we would soon have good news from the United States" (Quoted, *Papers Relating to Mexican Affairs*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., H. Ex. Doc. No. 93, p. 22.)

¹¹ Bigelow to Seward, Despatch No. 253, *ibid.*, p. 21.

¹² Seward to the French Minister to Washington (the Marquis de Montholon), published in *L'Opinion Nationale*, 25 janvier, 1866. According to the same paper (7 février, 1866) *Le Constitutionnel* was the only Paris journal neglecting the American despatches.

This frank statement of American policy, it was learned from other portions of the correspondence, was but the climax of a series of exchanges extending back to June, 1865; and also, that it was itself a rejoinder to an equally positive French note,¹³ dated November 29. This stated that France, having gone to Mexico to avenge wrongs committed against her, would not withdraw her army until she had made proper arrangements for the security of the future with the Mexican monarchy, whose recognition by the United States was asked, almost as a condition *sine qua non* of French evacuation. The note, further, needlessly stated that "France did not consider as the head of Mexico an ex-president who was deeding from village to village," and it ended with a phrase that could not but cause great anxiety in France. This was that France objected to American insistence on the withdrawal of its Mexican forces and informed the United States that it would never yield to haughty injunctions or threatening insinuations.

The situation, judged from such notices, was one of serious impasse, and altho it represented things as they stood in November and December, 1865, there was nothing in the Imperial Speech, notwithstanding all its optimism, to convince people that the grave antagonism manifested by the despatches had been dispelled. Nor did the "Yellow Book,"¹⁴ distributed to the Corps the day after the Speech, dissipate the apprehension. That document rather increased anxiety by its omission of all exchanges with America on the Question of Mexico. Vain, indeed, was its explanation for this omission, appearing as a footnote to the table of contents. This said that, due to some inconveniences of viewpoint when the negotiations opened, the Imperial Government had reserved the publication of the correspondence on the subject of Mexico which the Emperor would later communicate to the Corps.

Certainly, such annotation could only imply for the appre-

¹³ Published in L'Opinion Nationale, 31 janvier, 1866.

¹⁴ Affaires Étrangères, Documents Diplomatiques, 1866.

hensive reader that affairs were still in the perilous *status quo*. And this was not an incorrect inference, as the publication of the withheld correspondence, a few days later, proved. This complement of the "Yellow Book," transmitted to the Corps, January 30, contained a batch of French correspondence¹⁵ with Washington, the latest parcel of which, dated January 9, 1866, was the Government's reply to the American despatch of December 16. From this reply which exactly displayed the current state of affairs, the public learned the meaning of the phrase "some inconveniences of viewpoint," which signified a wrangle between Secretary Seward and Foreign Minister Drouyn de Lhuys over the meaning of "non-intervention."

An outline of that wrangle or debate is important at this point, and this will include a brief consideration of the five following despatches and notes:—(1) de Lhuys' despatch to de Montholon (January 9); (2) de Lhuys' memorandum to Bigelow (January 11); (3) Seward's memorandum to Bigelow (February 6); (4) Seward's note to de Montholon (February 12); and, (5) de Lhuys' despatch to de Montholon (April 5).

1. The first of these, as observed, was the French reply to the American note of December 16, 1865. By this reply, Foreign Minister de Lhuys read Secretary Seward a lecture on the principle of non-intervention with reference to Mexico. Mr. Seward was informed with politesse and firmness that he did not appreciate the intentions of France, who had gone to Mexico not to bring about a monarchical proselytism but to obtain a reparation, and who, in supporting a monarchy set up there by the will of the Mexican people, merely exercised

¹⁵ The most important parts of this were copied in *Le Moniteur* (30 janvier), *L'Opinion Nationale* (31 janvier), and in the *Débats* (31 janvier). The latter exposed itself to a "warning" in saying, in the introduction to its selections that "Comme le lecteur ne l'ignore pas, le gouvernement français n'avait pas d'abord jugé à propos de mettre ces dépêches sous les yeux du public, mais les États-Unis n'ayant vu aucun inconvénient à porter à la connaissance de tous les documents présentés au Congrès, la réserve que l'on imposait en France n'avait plus de raison d'être."

the right of a belligerent. Seward's protest against this action of France de Lhuys strenuously objected to as an offense against the principle of non-intervention. France he said had in no way offended the principle, and had so little intention of so doing that she was actually striving to make satisfactory arrangements with Maximilian, which satisfying her honor and interests would permit her to withdraw her army. He concluded, expressing the hope that such explanations would satisfy the United States, and that the latter like France would observe the principle of non-intervention with regard to the Mexican war.¹⁶

2. In a memorandum¹⁷ transmitted thru Minister Bigelow, January 11, de Lhuys expatiated on his opinion that the protested actions of France in Mexico were the legitimate actions of a belligerent Power. His own definition of war, given in the memorandum, is sufficient summary of his support of that thesis. "To make war," he said, "is not only the overthrow of fortifications and to kill a certain number of men. It is especially to assure a right infringed upon, the vindication of which has rendered necessary the employment of arms, and the means of execution incident to war remain legitimate until that end is fully attained."

3. Seward's concurrence with this definition legitimizing everything France was doing or might wish to do in Mexico was out of the question, and, indeed, his short note¹⁸ to Bigelow acknowledging the receipt of the memorandum wholly disregarded it, being limited to the statement that the French note was under consideration, and that the French Government, having transferred the discussion to Washington, the Paris embassy would be relieved from further direct action.

4. The note thus referred to by Seward was that sent thru de Montholon, January 9. The American reply¹⁹ to this was

¹⁶ De Lhuys thru de Montholon, published, *Papers Relating to Mexican Affairs*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., H. Ex. Doc. No. 93, pp. 17-20.

¹⁷ Published, *ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁸ Despatch No. 382, published, *ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁹ Seward thru de Montholon, published, *ibid.*, pp. 27-39.

substantially as follows. Referring to the claims made by de Lhuys that the French army had not imported monarchy into Mexico, and that Maximilian's throne rested on the will of the Mexican people, Seward stated how delicate was the discussion to which M. de Lhuys invited him. He hardly welcomed this, and said that France was entitled by every consideration of respect and friendship to interpret for herself the object and purpose of her expedition, and her whole proceedings in Mexico, and that her explanations of that motive and object were accepted by the United States with the consideration and confidence it would expect for explanations of its own when assigned to France or to any other Power. Nevertheless, he continued, it was his duty to insist that whatever had been the object and purpose of France the proceedings adopted by a certain class of Mexicans for subverting the republican government of Mexico, and for availing themselves of French intervention to establish on its ruins an imperial monarchy were regarded by the United States as actions both taken and prosecuted against the will of the Mexican people. For these and other reasons, he said, it appeared to his government, that in supporting institutions, thus established in derogation of the inalienable rights of the people of Mexico, the original purposes and objects of the expedition had become subordinated to a political revolution which certainly would not have occurred had France not forcibly intervened, and that these institutions by reason of the character of the Mexican people would not be maintained if that armed intervention ceased.²⁰

In another section of his long note, adverting to the assertion that the Mexican people wished monarchy, Seward said that the United States perceived no satisfactory evidence that the Mexican people had thus spoken, and that the withdrawal of the French army was necessary before such a proceeding could take place. This was the view of Mexican affairs held, he emphasized, without one dissenting voice, by the people of

²⁰ Papers Relating to Mexican Affairs, 39th Cong., 1st sess., H. Ex. Doc. No. 93, p. 29.

the United States, who deemed the presence of a foreign army in Mexico a source of danger both to itself and to all the republics of the New World. Thus, he abruptly concluded, he was brought to repeat what had formed the subject of his communication of December 16, namely, the desirability of the adjustment of a question the continuance of which must necessarily be prejudicial to the harmony and friendship which hitherto had always existed between America and France.²¹

This note putting matters back where they were three months before was a heavy blow to de Lhuys and the Emperor, who spent the next several weeks pondering their reply. And that period was not too long, for the serious situation demanded careful thought. Seward, too, appreciated deeply the gravity of matters, but he was, nevertheless, hopeful²² of a successful issue. In looking thru his despatches, however, one finds no ground for the optimism. He is unbending thruout, steadfastly refusing to compromise, and France's latest offer (by the January 9 despatch) to quit Mexico if the United States promised by treaty not to intervene after her withdrawal, is rejected²³ as emphatically as her December offer to leave the country if Maximilian were accorded recognition. Nothing short of unconditional withdrawal would satisfy Seward.

But if he was thus uncompromising he was not so at the expense of tact. In the note refusing the treaty, he assured de Lhuys that if he understood a part of his note as signifying an immediate resolve on the part of the Emperor to withdraw his Mexican forces, France need have no fear of American intervention in Mexico after that evacuation was accomplished.²⁴ Whether or not it was on this tactful sentence that Seward founded his hope I do not know; but one may reasonably infer that that assuring sentence made possible

²¹ Ibid., p. 36.

²² Tho hardly expectant; see his No. 408 to Bigelow, *ibid.*, p. 38.

²³ See his note thru de Montholon, H. Ex. Doc. No. 93, p. 33.

²⁴ Papers Relating to Mexican Affairs, 39th Cong., 1st sess., H. Ex. Doc. No. 93, p. 34.

the dignified acquiescence expressed in the French reply ²⁵ of April 5.

5. In this de Lhuys refused to follow Seward in his exposition of the principles directing the policy of the United States. For, he said, it did not appear to him opportune or profitable to prolong on points of doctrine or of history a discussion where France might differ in opinion from the United States without danger to the interests of the two countries. He considered it better to serve those interests by abstaining from discussing assertions "in his opinion very contestable," in order to take action on assurances which might contribute to facilitate an understanding. Then quoting Seward's assurance that without a treaty France need not fear American intervention after her withdrawal, de Lhuys announced that it was satisfactory to have this resolve of the United States, and that, receiving the assurance with confidence, the Emperor had decided to withdraw his Mexican army in three detachments.²⁶

This note of de Lhuys brought the debate on non-intervention to an abrupt close. The issue was in no way to the liking of the Emperor but matters might have terminated much more unsatisfactorily, had Seward's informal assurance been rejected, and the treaty insisted on. He undoubtedly appreciated that possibility, and the thought was consoling. But his best comfort of the moment, perhaps, was the apparent acceptance ²⁷ by the public, which was wholly ignorant ²⁸ of what had passed between Washington and Paris

²⁵ De Lhuys thru de Montholon, *ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ "L'Opinion publique a accueilli avec une vive satisfaction la note du Moniteur qui assigne un terme à l'expédition du Mexique et annonce le retour succesif de nos troupes. De ce côté, toute l'inquiétude est maintenant dissipée et tout doute a disparu." (La France, 7 avril, 1866.)

²⁸ And the official journal during this period tried to make the ignorance as cheerful as possible. The following exemplifies its efforts: "Le ton des journaux (American) relativement à la question Mexicaine est fort adouci. Le Daily News (N. Y.) qui se montrait il y a quelque temps si véhément dans ses attaques contre l'ordre de choses établi au Mexique contient dans ses récents numéros un article plutôt favorable qu'hostile au gouvernement de l'Empereur Maximilien." (Le Moniteur, 16 février, 1866.)

since January, of the following version of the withdrawal resolution: *Said Le Moniteur*,²⁹

As a result of the communications exchanged between the government of France and Maximilian, the Emperor has decided to recall the French troops in three detachments; the first, in November, 1866; the second, in March, 1867; and the third, in November, 1867.

It would be idle to conjecture what credibility this statement had in the opinion of those who did their own thinking on Mexico, and it is better to turn our attention to the actions and opinions of these and their opponents during the critical weeks preceding the Imperial resolve. We shall first notice the situation in the press. President Johnson's Message, as we have seen, brought the Liberal and the Imperialist newspapers again into lively conflict, and during the weeks immediately following the Message some harsh words were exchanged.

No noteworthy recrimination, however, occurred till after the beginning of the New Year, when in consequence of an article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*³⁰ their contradiction became bitter. The article in question, which was recommended and reprinted by several Independent dailies,³¹ was well-fitted to stir up bitterness by its attempt to show that France's enterprise in Mexico had produced a war whose success it was a patriotic duty for Americans to prevent.

Le *Mémorial Diplomatique* denounced the article as "a requisition against the situation of France in Mexico, and an appeal to action on the part of the United States."³² It denied a statement in the article that President Johnson's words carried an implication that an antagonism of interests and principles existed between France and the United States, "whose best friend" Le *Mémorial* rightly pointed out, "among the heads of the European governments is the Emperor autocrat of all the Russias; and whose relations with the Emperor of Brazil are the best, and who," Le

²⁹ 5 avril, 1866.

³⁰ 1 janvier, 1866.

³¹ See *Le Mémorial Diplomatique*, 14 janvier, 1866.

³² *Ibid.*

Mémorial concluded, "have never affected to be the absolute champions of the principle of republicanism, sacrificing their repose, their gold, and their blood to have it everywhere triumph."³³

But the Independents were incorrigible; and the third week of the New Year found their opinions to be such as to cause *Le Constitutionnel*³⁴ to label them "more American than the Americans," and *La France*,³⁵ to desire the prohibition of all untoward discussion of the expedition. The Imperial censor, however, took no action, and the debate went on till the reopening of the Corps when the Imperial Speech attracted sufficient attention to induce a lull in the fight. But this was very brief for the appearance of the "Yellow Book" Supplement brought the foes again into sharp collision.

That document, containing de Lhuys' vigorous protests against American interference in the Mexican war, was specially welcome to *Le Constitutionnel*, which learned with pleasure from "these despatches that the French Government had not retreated one step before the pretensions of the United States."³⁶ This chauvinism at a moment of the intensest national anxiety was keenly resented by *L'Opinion Nationale*,³⁷ which said:

Inasmuch as we must admit that *Le Constitutionnel* is in a better position to know the veritable mind of the Government, we cannot oppose a single objection to this utterance. But if such be the state of the Mexican Question, disquiet must increase, for what if the American Government becomes as obstinate as ours? What if the American Government refuses to retreat one step from its pretentions?

The boastful Imperialist however was quite unaffected by the reigning disquiet, and it made this unmistakably clear to "those journals who set so little value on moral interest," such, for example as *L'Opinion Nationale*:

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ 26 janvier, 1866.

³⁵ 31 janvier, 1866.

³⁶ Quoted without date, *L'Opinion Nationale*, 3 février, 1866.

³⁷ 3 février, 1866.

These may as well know, once for all, that the Imperial Government will never yield to any intimidation and excitement whatever, whether this be at home or abroad. Nothing will cause the Emperor to relax in his habitual solicitude for the moral and material interests of the country; and they may as well know in addition that the French army will return from Mexico precisely on the conditions mentioned in the Speech from the Throne; namely, without endangering French interests which we went to defend in that distant country.³⁸

This bluster made the *Débats*³⁹ wonder "what the semi-official wished to come out of it." The ranting, said this journal, contained only one thing it could understand with certainty. This was that *Le Constitutionnel*

signalized as bad Frenchmen; that is, Frenchmen lacking every particle of patriotism, all who demanded the recall of the troops, and all who obstinately considered the occupation of Mexico a perilous situation from any aspect, and one, therefore, from which France should depart as soon as possible.⁴⁰

L'Opinion Nationale,⁴¹ professing profound disgust with the whole discussion, called upon *Le Constitutionnel* to drop a matter so irritant to the public conscience, and take a "cool look at the Mexican situation, which would show that France had done all that was possible in Mexico and should withdraw her army." This was, of course, asking the impossible of *Le Constitutionnel*, whose "logogriphs," as the *Débats* labelled the rantings, seemed quite proper to the Government, to whom, indeed, only the discussions of the Independents were irritant. Despite the irritancy of these, however, it was deemed expedient to tolerate them at least, as long as they did not invoke certain distasteful slogans used heretofore against the Mexican policy.

There was an instance of such invocation. The culprit was *La Presse* which most unseasonably said that the sole object of the expedition from the very outset was the foundation of a Mexican monarchy which might serve as a check to the

³⁸ *Le Constitutionnel*, quoted without date, *London Times*, February 2, 1866.

³⁹ 9 février, 1866.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 9 février, 1866.

advance of the Anglo-Saxon race in the New World.⁴² Such a statement at such an hour needs no comment, and I may dismiss it saying that *La Presse* for this almost capital offense merited the "avertissement" that followed. This punishment might well have followed the expression of an opinion much less provocative; for, in February, 1866, there was but one wholly safe way to discuss the Question of Mexico.

This secure path *La France*⁴³ pointed out, in recommending the following principles for development:

Two considerations reassure France in Mexico. The first is that no one in France and no one out of France can desire or hope we should quit Mexico, and abandon without guarantee to the hazard of violent reaction and anarchy the interests we went to defend in that country. The second is that if we quit Mexico, the respect due our name and flag and the knowledge of our power will remain after us; and in no quarter of the world is any one ignorant that the sword of France is never too far off to protect right or to avenge injury.

Here was positive guidance for all who wished to avoid a "warning" or worse. The Committee of the Project of the Address performed a like service for the Corps in offering it the following paragraph on Mexico:

Our expedition approaches its end. The country receives the assurance with satisfaction. Led to Mexico by the imperative duty of protecting our interests against odious acts of violence, and to obtain redress of legitimate grievances, our soldiers and sailors have worthily fulfilled the task your Majesty confided to their devotion.

The expedition has attested once again in that distant land, the disinterestedness and the power of France. . . . The people of the United States, who have long known the loyalty of our policy and the traditional sympathies by which it is inspired, have no reason to take offense at the presence of our army on Mexican soil. To wish to subordinate its recall to any other convenience than our own would be to attack our rights and honor. You, Sire, have these in charge, and the Legislative Body knows that you will watch over them with the solicitude worthy of France and of your name.⁴⁴

These paragraphs were read for the first time, February 19, when they met with thunderous applause from the vast majority of the Corps,⁴⁵ who on their presentation for con-

⁴² *La Presse*, February 10, 1866, quoted, *London Times*, February 13, 1866.

⁴³ Quoted without date, *ibid.*, February 14, 1866.

⁴⁴ *Annales*, 1866, tome i, p. 163.

⁴⁵ *L'Opinion Nationale*, 21 février, 1866.

sideration, March 2, promptly manifested a willingness to vote them without discussion, in compliance with a request of the Minister of State alleging that the current state of diplomatic relations made all discussion of the Mexican Question for the time inopportune.⁴⁶ Minister Rouher, however, did not succeed wholly in obviating discussion, but was forced to grapple with the Radicals who opposed the Government paragraphs with their customary condemnatory one.⁴⁷ A spirited discussion followed in consequence, and when this ended and the vote was taken the amendment lay buried under a count of 251 to 17.⁴⁸

On March 23, therefore, when the Emperor received in the Throne Hall of the Tuileries the deputation of the Corps, charged with presenting him with the Address voted in response to his Discourse, he could very truly say that the great majority of the Corps "has affirmed once more by the vote of the Address the policy which has given us fifteen years of peace and prosperity."⁴⁹

It was about two weeks after this reception that the *Moniteur* announced the Emperor's resolution to evacuate his Mexican army, and this prudent decision, wholly allaying the apprehension that had depressed people since late January, permitted them to breathe more freely as they watched the prelude of the Austro-Prussian War.

I shall not relate the well-known events of the spring of 1866, when Bismarck's plotting with Italy entrapped Austria into war. Nor shall I recount the story of that extremely brief conflict which ended 39 days, or more truly 19 days after its commencement at Sadowa, July 2, when, says Lord Acton "Moltke, in one pitched battle, succeeding where Gustavus,

⁴⁶ See *Annales*, 1866, tome ii, p. 83; Despatch No. 282, Papers Relating to Mexican Affairs, 39th Cong., 1st sess., H. Ex. Doc. No. 93, p. 39.

⁴⁷ Regretting that in spite of the solemn pronouncements on evacuation the country should see its army still devoted to the defense of a foreign throne.

⁴⁸ According to *L'Opinion Nationale* (22 mars, 1866); the *Annales* (1866, tome ii, p. 84), reporting this discussion gives no figures, and says only that it was rejected "par une très forte majorité".

⁴⁹ Quoted, *L'Opinion Nationale*, 24 mars, 1866.

Turenne, Frederic, and even Napoleon failed, overthrew forever the military power of Austria.”⁵⁰ I shall note only the effects of that conflict on the French Emperor, its most interested observer.

Its spectacle he had hoped would be somewhat of a pleasant diversion for France after her late apprehension concerning Mexico. The lightning success of Prussia, however, was ill-fitted to serve this hope. He resolved, nevertheless, to extract from the war some glory for his Empire, and since Austria, which he favored, offered him no victories he would snatch it from her defeats. Thus when Franz Josef, after the ominous disaster of Sadowa telegraphed asking France peacefully to intervene, and confirmed the cession of Venetia to her for ultimate transfer to Italy, the Emperor complied calling upon the belligerents to stop hostilities. Prussia was at first unheeding,⁵¹ but Sadowa had quite satisfied Bismarck, and, negotiations at length commenced,⁵² peace was signed at Prague, August 23.

Napoleon's mediation was believed to have been spontaneous, and France rejoiced at the apparently inexpensive fulfillment of her promise made in 1859 to liberate Italy from the Alps to the Adriatic. The Emperor, too, was pleased at his novel rôle of peacemaker. But his joy was not undiluted. Two things, at least, conspired to attenuate his happiness. One of these was the problem of making Prussia pay well for French neutrality during the war, and the other, which alone interests us, was the visit during the peace negotiations of an envoy “most-extraordinary” from the Court of Mexico.

⁵⁰ Lectures on Modern History, p. 191; “Never,” says another brilliant historian, “had a struggle between two great powers been shorter or more decisive. To the world at large it seemed that Prussia and Austria had changed places, not only in Germany, but in Europe, and that the power of the Hohenzollerns had been founded on the irretrievable ruin of that of the Hapsburgs”. (W. Alison Phillips, *Modern Europe, 1815-1899*, p. 444.)

⁵¹ But only apparently so. “From the day of Sadowa the interest of the war,” says Phillips, “becomes diplomatic rather than military, and it is Bismarck, and not Moltke, who guides it to its conclusion. Bismarck, indeed, tells us that the Prussian strategy during the latter part of the campaign was due to his initiative.” (*Modern Europe*, pp. 438-439.)

⁵² At Nikolsburg, July 22.

A rumor that the Empress Charlotte had sailed for France on an important mission had been for some time noised at Paris. Imperialist sheets found this rather disconcerting, and one of them said it was authorized to denounce the "bruit" in the most formal manner.⁵³ Another informed the public that there was not a single word of truth or reason in the report of Charlotte's coming.⁵⁴ But unhappily for the all-knowing pretensions of *Le Mémorial* and *Le Pays* another Mexican rumor was true, for a packet carrying the Empress of Mexico reached St. Nazaire, August 8, where she met with a most ragged reception, which I shall let her latest biographer⁵⁵ describe. The Countess Foussemagne writes:

The Prefect of the department had not received any orders to give the Empress a respectable reception. Not even a Mexican flag was displayed. A citizen of St. Nazaire, lately returned from Peru, had in his possession a Peruvian flag, and loaned that to the city officials. Only the mayor and his council were present at the debarkation, and ignorant of diplomatic usages and protocols, that official stuttered many excuses and regrets, saying that the city he administered was not yet beyond its infancy, but that her Majesty would admire the Rue Villez-Martin that extended to the beach and had many beautiful houses built on it, and also two comfortable hotels where the Court of Mexico would enjoy an excellent dinner, and pass a good night; etc. The Empress was unable to restrain her indignation; 'Monsieur, the mayor,' she said, 'I thank you. But how does it happen that the Prefect is not here to extend us a welcome? The troops have not presented us arms! The Court of Mexico thus must visit your city without escort. I order you, therefore, to conduct us without delay to the station. I wish to see the Emperor to-morrow.'

She reached Paris on August 9, and the reception there to Charlotte was no happier than the comedy of St. Nazaire.⁵⁶

No need to recount why Charlotte left Mexico to expose herself to these indignities. It is enough to mention the French mission of the spring of 1866 thru which Maximilian learned that he must provide for himself, and to allude to the Emperor's despatch to Washington announcing that the last division of his army would quit Mexico in November, 1867.

⁵³ *Le Mémorial Diplomatique*, 5 août, 1866.

⁵⁴ *Le Pays*, August 6, 1866; quoted, Despatch No. 357, U. S. Dip. Cor. 1866, part 1, pp. 336-337.

⁵⁵ Comtesse H. de Reinach Foussemagne, *Charlotte de Belgique, Impératrice du Mexique*.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 288-289.

But it is to waste words even to say these things when the very principal herself explains all:

'I have come to Paris,' said Charlotte to Madame Almonte, 'to demand of Napoleon the execution of the Treaty of Miramar. I carry the Crown of Mexico that, in accordance with his promise, he may confirm it.'⁵⁷

There is no record of the phrases by which she pleaded her cause. But we have the Treaty and its accompanying secret convention, whose preamble assuring French support to the new throne reads in part:

His Majesty, the Emperor of the French, and his Majesty, the Emperor of Mexico, wishing by some additional clauses to the preceding convention to explain in a complete manner their reciprocal intentions, and to have it understood that notwithstanding the events which may arise in Europe, the support of France shall not be wanting to the new Empire;⁵⁸

And whose second article, stipulating the duration of the stay of the French army in Mexico, reads:—

On his part his Majesty, the Emperor of the French declares that the present (1864) effective of the French corps, namely, 38,000 men, shall not be reduced but gradually and from year to year, in a manner that the troops who remain in Mexico in comprising the foreign legion shall be: of 28,000 men in 1865; of 25,000 men in 1866; of 23,000 men in 1867.⁵⁹

Little imagination is required to picture Charlotte, after she had gained admission to St. Cloud, August 10, sitting before the Emperor's desk and pointing a trembling finger at this latter clause, to the great embarrassment of the man who had so recently informed America that the French army would have completely evacuated Mexico in 1867. But notwithstanding his embarrassment he closed his eyes on the Treaty, and his ears to appeals, and when Charlotte, her eyes reddened with crying, left his office that afternoon, she was heard to exclaim in profound bitterness:

Oh how could I have forgotten what I am, and what you are! I should have kept before my mind that the blood of the Bourbons

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 288-289.

⁵⁸ Quoted, *ibid.*, p. 145.

⁵⁹ Quoted, *ibid.* Taxile Delord, *Histoire du Second Empire*, tome iv, pp. 189-191, gives full text of the treaty.

flows in my veins and not to have dishonored my race and my person in humiliating myself before a Bonaparte and in treating with an adventurer.⁶⁰

The situation of her husband, however, compelled her to gulp down her pride, and she was back at St. Cloud on the 13th after having seen the Ministers. The second interview in which she asked for men and money for Mexico was a second failure. The Emperor's excuse was that he could give no answer until he had consulted with his Ministers. These met on the 15th, just three years to a day after the great "N impériale" sparkled between "the glorious names" that had ushered in the Mexican Empire and voted unanimously—and it must be added in compliance with the Emperor's wishes—against further support for that Empire. It was not until the 21st, however, that Charlotte received the definitive answer: "No help for Mexico." And "the next day" says the Countess Foussemagne, whose work has furnished the details of these events, "Charlotte, still dazed from the terrible blow, wrote her husband":

I leave tomorrow for Miramar. This proves I have gotten nowhere. I have had the satisfaction of having refuted all his arguments. Napoleon refuses. It is not because of the opposition since it is he that has chosen the legislative body; still less is it fear of the United States. He wishes to commit an evil deed; not through cowardice, discouragement or any other reason, but because he represents the principle of evil in the world.⁶¹

It was common gossip on the 21st that Charlotte had thus failed. *Le Mémorial*, however, denied this. It admitted it could "not pretend knowing the definitive result of the Empress's sojourn at Paris, for the negotiations between their Majesties have been most intimate and direct." But it "did know that their Majesties had six long conferences and that Charlotte had stated that she had not regretted the fatigues of her voyage" and *Le Mémorial* concluded, "the negotiations will be resumed in October after Napoleon and Eugenie have returned from Biarritz. We insist on this last circumstance," it added, "because the sensational journals wish to

⁶⁰ Comtesse Foussemagne, p. 295.

⁶¹ Quoted, *ibid.*, pp. 299-301.

have it believed that Charlotte is to retire definitively to Miramar where, according to an English newspaper, Maximilian is on the eve of joining her."⁶²

This was but a pleasant fiction, and *Le Mémorial* probably knew that it was. Charlotte most bitterly regretted the fatigues of her voyage, and there were to be no further conferences, in France at least, for the physical and mental wreck that on the 22nd quitted Paris where her every effort had ended in utter failure. And not the least reasonable explanation of her failure, although Charlotte would deny this, was the ever-waxing insistence of Jules Favre's American successors.

Napoleon was never for a day permitted to forget the promise made America in April. Every now and then he received a reminder that it was to be kept. In May he was informed that seventeen more months of French troops in Mexico was not an extremely satisfying prospect,⁶³ and Secretary Seward expressed the hope that France might find it compatible with her interests and honor to abbreviate still more the delay of her troops on Mexican soil.⁶⁴ De Lhuys protested against this hope as militating against the right of France to full freedom of action in accordance with the stipulated delay.⁶⁵ Seward then changed his tune to insist on the withdrawal as agreed upon, and in August when the Imperialist press announced a change in the evacuation program in consequence of Charlotte's visit, his minister extracted from the French Foreign Office the statement that no modification had been made in French policy in the matter of the evacuation of Mexico. "Although," said the Minister, "Charlotte had been received with courtesy and cordiality the plans of withdrawal heretofore determined upon by the French Government will be executed in the way announced."⁶⁶ In spite of

⁶² *Le Mémorial Diplomatique*, 26 août, 1866.

⁶³ See De Montholon's note to De Lhuys (May 1, 1866), *Affaires Étrangères, Documents Diplomatiques*, 1867 (No. 8), p. 336.

⁶⁴ See Seward's note to De Montholon (April 2, 1866) accompanying the same French despatch, *ibid.*, pp. 336-338.

⁶⁵ See De Lhuys' note to De Montholon (June 7, 1866), *ibid.*, p. 339.

⁶⁶ U. S. Dip. Cor., 1866, part 1, pp. 337-338.

this assurance, however, the American embassy in September received a standing order to watch for possible changes in the evacuation plans, and to register formal protest against them in the event of their appearance.⁶⁷

The Imperial Government was anxious to dispel the doubt manifested by Seward's insistence, and changes of Ministry did not lessen this anxiety. When, in fact, the Marquis de Moustier succeeded de Lhuys as Foreign Minister in the late fall of 1866, one of his first acts was to inform his Washington embassy that the evacuation program of his predecessor would suffer no essential change under him. "His Majesty," he wrote de Montholon, "has fixed the year 1867 as the extreme limit of our military occupation of Mexico—that limit will not be exceeded, and our desire, on the contrary, is to advance it as much as possible."⁶⁸

This latest assurance, however, mentioning only the extreme limit of the occupation, was accompanied by information that, for the security and health of the troops, the plan of successive evacuation originally adopted was to be abandoned for one of collective and integral withdrawal, which would occur in the spring of 1867.⁶⁹ But of this change de Montholon was not empowered to inform Seward, who received his first official notice of it through a despatch from Minister Bigelow, November 8.⁷⁰

This new resolution of the Emperor to withdraw his Mexican forces *en masse*, and thus wash his hands of Mexico as soon as possible, met with cordial applause from the Independent press, which had been advising collective repatria-

⁶⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 358.

⁶⁸ De Moustier to de Montholon (October 16, 1866), Documents Diplomatiques, 1867, pp. 339-340.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 340.

⁷⁰ Bigelow at first learned of the change from the daily press and immediately calling on de Moustier complained against it. De Moustier's answer to his objections are summarized in a note to de Montholon, November 8, 1866 (Documents Diplomatiques, 1867, p. 342). It was that the Washington government instead of taking umbrage at the alteration should rather felicitate itself on the combination of events that led the French government to withdraw its army *en masse*, long before the time dated for the last partial evacuation.

tion since early fall. Their arguments for such evacuation, however, except in one or two instances, differed radically from those given by the Government.⁷¹ And they might well differ; for they repeated almost every argument they had employed against the expedition from its very outset, with the result that the old antagonism between Independent and Imperialist press again displayed itself, and to the wonted disadvantage of the latter.

But if the domestic opponents were pleased with this new arrangement the American "Opposition" was not. Seward said in his reply to Bigelow's note of November,

Say to Mr. Moustier that this government is surprised and affected with deep concern by the announcement, now made for the first time, that the promised recall of one detachment of French troops from Mexico, in November current has been postponed by the Emperor.

The embarrassment thus produced is immeasurably increased by the circumstances that this proceeding of the Emperor has been taken without conference, and even without notice to the United States . . . the Emperor's decision to modify the existing arrangement . . . is now found in every way inconvenient and exceptionable.

First. Because the term 'next Spring' as appointed for the entire evacuation, is indefinite and vague.

Second. Because we have no authority for stating to Congress, and to the American people that we have now a better guarantee for the withdrawal of the whole expeditionary force in the Spring than we have heretofore had for the withdrawal of a part in November.

Third. In full reliance upon at least a literal performance of the Emperor's existing agreement, we have taken measures, while facilitating the anticipated French evacuation, to cooperate with the republican government of Mexico for promoting the pacification of that country, and for the early and complete restoration of the proper constitutional authority of that government. As a part of these measures, Mr. Campbell, our newly appointed Minister, attended by Lieutenant-General Sherman, has been sent to Mexico to confer with President Juarez on subjects which are deeply interesting to the United States and of vital importance to Mexico.

. . . You will, therefore, state to the Emperor's government that the President sincerely hopes that the evacuation of Mexico will be carried into effect with such conformity to the existing agreement

⁷¹ These appear in the de Moustier-de Montholon note of October 16; "Les nouvelles," it reads in part, "reçues du Mexique dans ces derniers temps, accusent un état de choses qui doit éveiller notre sollicitude. Les résistances armées se multiplient, les dissidents se montrent en force . . . et un moment donné, le mode d'évacuation successive primitivement adopté par nous, pourrait placer nos soldats dans une situation difficile si nous les laissons ainsi en petit nombre isolés à une si grande distance de l'Europe." (Documents Diplomatiques, 1867, p. 340.)

as the inopportune complication which calls for this despatch shall allow. . . . You will assure the French government that the United States desire nothing more earnestly than to preserve peace and friendship with France. Nor does the President allow himself to doubt that what has been determined in France, most inauspiciously, as we think, has been decided upon inadvertently, without full reflection upon the embarrassment it must produce here, and without any design to retain the French forces in Mexico beyond the full period of eighteen months, originally stipulated for the complete evacuation.⁷²

Of this sharp protest as also of the "amicable explanations"⁷³ offered in reply, the Imperial Government kept the public in convenient ignorance. But news of President Johnson's Second Annual Message reaching Paris, December 20, made it impossible long to hide the painful situation obtaining between the two Governments. On Mexican affairs the President said in part:

In the month of April last, as Congress is aware, a friendly arrangement was made between the Emperor of France and the President of the United States, for the withdrawal from Mexico of the French expeditionary forces. This withdrawal was to be effected in three detachments, the first of which, it was understood, would leave Mexico in November, now past; the second in March next; and the third and last in November, 1867. . . . Repeated assurances have been given by the Emperor since that agreement that he would complete the evacuation within the period mentioned or sooner.

It was reasonably expected that the proceedings thus contemplated would produce a crisis in the Republic of Mexico (Here the President alluded to the American diplomatic and military mission to Mexico, which, he stated, had as object the obtaining of such information as might be important for determining the course to be pursued by the United States in reestablishing and maintaining necessary and proper intercourse with Mexico). . . . Such was the condition of our affairs in regard to Mexico, when on the 22nd of November last, official information was received from Paris that the Emperor of France had sometime before decided not to withdraw a detachment of his forces in the month of November past, according to engagement, but that this decision was made with the purpose of withdrawing the whole of those forces in the ensuing Spring. Of this determination, however, the United States had not received any notice or intimation, and as soon as the information was received by this Government care was taken to make known its dissent to the Emperor of France.

I cannot forego the hope that France will reconsider the subject and adopt some resolution in regard to the evacuation of Mexico which will conform as nearly as practicable with the existing agreement, and thus meet the just expectations of the United States.

⁷² U. S. Dip. Cor. 1866, part 1, p. 336.

⁷³ See de Moustier's despatch to Berthemy (new French Minister to Washington), Documents Diplomatiques, 1867, p. 351.

(He then concluded, announcing that correspondence relating to the subject would be laid before Congress and stating his belief that with the evacuation of Mexico by the expeditionary forces no subject for serious difference between France and the United States would remain). The expressions of the Emperor and the people of France warrant the hope that the traditionary friendship between the two countries might in that case be renewed and permanently restored.⁷⁴

In a chapter already too prolix it would be inconsiderate to illustrate at any length the reaction of the Paris press to these remarks. The two following extracts, therefore, must suffice for such illustration:

The President's Message (observed the *Débats*),⁷⁵ is not the work of a statesman penetrated with the grave responsibility which his high functions confer on him, but of a vulgar, and ambitious man, much more concerned about his own fortunes than that of his country; for Mr. Johnson seems only to have aimed at flattering the passions of the people in order to recover the influence which is escaping him.

It is interesting to compare this angry, and quite unjust comment of a constant foe of the Mexican expedition with the following considerateness of the special defender of Maximilian's Empire:—

Keeping in mind (said *Le Mémorial Diplomatique*),⁷⁶ the difficult situation of Mr. Johnson, who, on a foreign question engaging the famous Monroe Doctrine, should have fear to aggravate still more his unpopularity at home, one cannot but be struck by the relative moderation of his language, and one can only state with empressement that it at least contains nothing wounding as regards France. And since the evacuation of Mexico by the French expeditionary forces had been decided; and is pursued at this moment with all the celerity desirable nothing can forbid the hope that the relations between Paris and Washington will be the better for it, and thus permit the Cabinet of the Tuileries to safeguard after the repatriation of our soldiers the interests which made necessary the expedition of 1862. This is not, to speak the truth, that we share all the ideas of President Johnson on the rights and duties of non-intervention.

The optimism of *Le Mémorial* was all very good. But it was not to be denied that the presidential message made a year already too burdened with the effects of faulty foreign policy more onerous still.

The year 1866 had, assuredly, been a very bad one for

⁷⁴ Messages and Papers of the Presidents, VIII, 3653-3654.

⁷⁵ Quoted without date, *London Times*, December 21, 1866.

⁷⁶ 23 décembre, 1866.

France. Almost everything had gone awry. Bismarck and his king had outwitted the Emperor whose neutrality in the Seven Weeks War had not only not rounded out the Eastern frontier, but it had brought the Kingdom of Bavaria to the threshold of union with her victorious enemy.

Such was the state of affairs on the Continent. Across the Atlantic too Imperial policy had gone totally amiss. Having bet on the wrong horse during the late conflict between the States, Napoleon could hardly consider as an ally America which had so long cherished the memory of Louis XVI. Certainly France was no longer the protector of Latin civilization in Mexico, where the useless delay of her army prevented the much needed restoration of friendly relations with the United States. It was, therefore, not without reason that one reviewer⁷⁷ of the passing year wrote at the heading of his survey, which I have thus summarized, the doleful phrase:—

“Quelle année que celle qui se termine, et quel triste bilan 1866 lègue à l'histoire!”

⁷⁷ Le Correspondant, 23 décembre, 1866.

CHAPTER VI

THE MEXICAN QUESTION, 1867-1869. CONCLUSIONS

"L'odyssée de l'Intervention française était achevée, mais non à la satisfaction rêvée. Elle n'avait pas résolu la question Mexicaine." Colonel Blanchot, *Mémoires sur l'Intervention Française au Mexique*.

The hope expressed in Secretary Seward's note, and in President Johnson's Message, was realized in a French telegram of January 10, 1867, instructing the commander-in-chief of the expeditionary forces to begin the integral evacuation of Mexico.¹

This instruction was hardly disagreeable to General Bazaine, who had lost all interest in Maximilian's Empire, and who was, in addition intimately convinced that the Republic was the decided preference of the Mexican people.² It was, therefore, carried out with promptness; and quitting Mexico City, February 5, the rear guard of the expeditionary army began its march to the coast where more than thirty ships were anchored for its repatriation. The embarkation of the whole army began on the 14th of the same month and was finished March 12, when Bazaine and his staff sailed for Toulon "there to bear the brunt of popular ill-will which had been growing slowly under the accumulating news of sterile victories and wasted millions till capped by the humiliating reasons for the retreat and the inglorious circumstances attending it."³

The day on which this embarkation commenced, the great organizer of the expedition had a very hard speech to make by reason of its painful paragraphs on that exploit. This failure he tried hard to mitigate by insisting that "only an inauspicious concurrence of circumstances thwarted the realization of the lofty thought of regenerating a people and planting among them ideas of order and progress. Such," the Emperor

¹ Bancroft, *History of Mexico*, VI, 264.

² L'Opinion Nationale (19 février, 1867) on Bazaine's evacuation proclamation.

³ *History of Mexico*, VI, 268.

told the Corps, "was my purpose and yours. But the day the extent of the sacrifices appeared to me to exceed the interests which called us across the ocean I spontaneously determined upon the recall of our army."⁴ And to this very contestable statement the Emperor added one equally disputable; that "the United States have understood that an attitude of little conciliation would only have prolonged the occupation and embittered relations which for the welfare of both countries should remain friendly."⁵ And he closed this speech to which the corps was never to vote a Reply⁶ with a cordial and well-merited expression of thanks to the Majority for its constant support and encouragement.

Two veteran Opposition papers which had never wholly neglected an Imperial utterance on Mexico, the *Débats* and *L'Opinion Nationale*, passed over these remarks, apparently wishing the whole matter forgotten. But not so *Le Mémorial Diplomatique*,⁷ which made "the Emperor's renunciation of his generous and equitable intentions" the subject of a long article which stressed the "spontaneity" of the recall. *Le Mémorial* struck the same chord again on the appearance of the *Yellow Book*⁸ when it showed dissatisfaction with the compilers of this for somewhat neglecting the spontaneity of the withdrawal, and going out of their way to show that French relations with America were the best.

This complaint of *Le Mémorial* was not altogether unreasonable; for it is hard to believe that the French Corps, in immense majority Imperialist to the core and strongly anti-Unionist during the late war, were particularly interested in learning of "the marvelous activity with which that great nation repairs the calamities of the civil war."⁹ They were

⁴ *Annales*, 1867, tome i, p. 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ The privilege of voting an Address was withdrawn by Imperial decree, January 19, 1867.

⁷ 17 février, 1867.

⁸ *Exposé de la Situation de l'Empire, Affaires Étrangères*, 1867; published in part in *Le Moniteur*, 18 février, 1867.

⁹ "Exposé de la Situation de l'Empire," *Le Moniteur*, 18 février, 1867.

more probably, at that moment, in no state of mind to relish encomiums upon the United States. Even the *Livre Jaune's* comment on the recall was little welcome to the Majority who now, indeed, found all information on Mexico rather useless. They seemed to wish the affair definitively closed, and manifested keen displeasure that it should again disturb the serenity of the Chamber when, on March 18, Jules Favre, while speaking on Prussia, drifted into the sombre topic.

Murmurings instantly greeted the digression, and Favre, warned by the president of the Corps, Count Walewski, to stick to the topic before the Assembly, replied that altho Mexico was not the immediate subject of debate, it had much to do with the German war, and he began straightway to prove this opinion. The murmurings which had continued now increased, Favre was again stopped, but he refused to yield, declaring again that the expedition had a great deal to do with the recent war and that its only results were the blood and treasure France had wasted and the ignominy she now suffered for her attempt to found a fantastic empire. As he uttered this, loud noises assailed him from all sides of the Chamber and he presently found it impossible to go on against the drowning clamor of the Majority. He then yielded, and retained the floor only at the expense of dropping all reference to the expedition.¹⁰

But if the "*Quaestio vexantissima*" was thus ruled out of the Corps, it was not yet permanently to be so. The evacuation of the French forces had settled the question only in its military and political aspects. It left untouched the financial side; and this was by no means to be ignored.

Bazaine's transports had not brought back to France a sou of the millions of francs invested in Maximilian's empire by the three hundred thousand¹¹ persons who had purchased Mexican bonds in 1864 and 1865. The Government and the Corps had implicated themselves in the Mexican loans, at least in the opinion of the purchasers, and these signified¹²

¹⁰ *Annales*, 1867, tome ii, pp. 246-247.

¹¹ Figures according to *Le Mémorial Diplomatique*, 18 mai, 1867.

¹² By numerous petitions for compensation in which, after observing

as early as March, 1867, that the Corps was not yet done with the question of Mexico; for there was at that time the most positive indication that Mexican bonds would shortly be worthless.

The evacuation of the French was the death sentence of the Mexican Empire. Maximilian was well aware of this, but pride made hope stronger than knowledge, and inexorable to the appeals of his late ally to abdicate, he carried on a rapidly losing fight for the throne to which he honestly believed Mexico had called him.

The tragic end of that brief struggle needs no recounting, and I shall note only some of its effects on France where the news of Maximilian's execution¹³ was read July 3. It was at first denied by the Official Journal as well as by the inspired sheets. But on the 5th, the *Moniteur* dolefully confirmed it, while the enemies of the fallen Empire joined with Imperialists in rendering justice to Maximilian's courage in his awful adversity. The sad news, however, was made by some an occasion of ill-timed repartee: "After this," said the angry *La France*, "at least let us hope there will be no longer any Juarists in France."¹⁴ The *Débats* was the object of this dart, and it replied:

No, there will not be any more Juarists here. And there never were any as far as we know. There were some French people who approved of the departure of Maximilian to Mexico, and some who disapproved of it; and would that that unfortunate Prince had followed the advice of the latter, who opposed the enterprise in which triumph was without glory, and in which defeat must needs have ended in terrible disaster.¹⁵

that the evacuation of Mexico meant a total loss of their investments, the petitioners emphasized that "Quand ils ont prêté leur argent au Gouvernement du Mexique après les déclarations réitérées de M. le Ministre de l'État à la tribune de la Chambre, ils ont cru que ces paroles, les démarches de MM. les receveurs généraux, les receveurs particuliers intermédiaires, de cet emprunt, engageaient le Gouvernement vis-à-vis d'eux-mêmes." (Quoted, *Le Mémorial Diplomatique*, 26 mars, 1867.) Evidently, therefore, the speech of April 10, 1865 contained a moral guarantee on the part of the Government, notwithstanding M. Rouher's utterances to the contrary.

¹³ June 19.

¹⁴ Quoted without date, *L'Opinion Nationale*, 6 juillet, 1867.

¹⁵ Quoted without date, *ibid.*

The *Journal de Paris* expressed sincere grief at the Emperor's tragic end, and then added insinuatingly, "all the miseries of the expedition are at least effaced for him by this great catastrophe and his name will go down to posterity marked with the seal of royal heroism, rare in these days."¹⁶ *Le Mémorial Diplomatique*,¹⁷ forgetful, in its ire at the disaster, of its approval of the withdrawal, seemed to concur with this last phrase in finding in Maximilian's execution "a barbarous application of the Monroe Doctrine, whose principles France had permitted to be affirmed too easily."

From these extracts which well enough illustrate the reaction of the press to the dénouement, I pass to some consideration of that of the Corps. This body was occupied with the discussion of the budget when the tragedy of Querataro was learned. Every member was shocked, for no one thought it would come to that. Thiers had a speech on Mexico planned for July 7, but thinking the moment now too unfavorable for the best utterance, he postponed it till the 10th, when he again delivered what was perhaps the greatest speech of the session, taking as his subject the history of the Mexican campaign and its disastrous ending.

His object in this was to lay the whole string of the Mexican disasters at their proper door; and in fact, no member than he was better qualified for this task. It was a most able attempt, but not too just. In giving an excellent survey of the different phases thru which the Mexican policy passed Thiers laid altogether too great stress on the responsibility of the Government, and too little on that of the Corps. This was an injustice which resulted, doubtless, from the wish of the orator, who was an untiring advocate of constitutional monarchy, to hold up the Mexican failure as a warning against the personal government of the Emperor.¹⁸

¹⁶ Quoted without date, *ibid.*

¹⁷ 6 juillet, 1867.

¹⁸ *Annales*, 1867, tome ix, pp. 73-90. Thiers' studied drifting, in the speech, from "Mexico" to "personal government" was highly objectionable, and when he asked permission at the close of his speech to add another word the president informed him of the seriousness of his position, saying: "Je demande que ce mot soit tel que je ne

The Mexican policy was in truth the Emperor's, and his Ministers its executors. But the easy or difficult execution of the policy very much depended on the holders of the purse strings. The Corps, as we have seen, readily voted every financial and moral subsidy requested by the Emperor for his expedition, and shared, therefore, together with him and his Government all the responsibilities of that disaster.

Thiers, we will recall, did not neglect, and justly, to stress the Corps' responsibility in 1864. To have done likewise in 1867 would have been equally just. In this year, however, it did not fit in with his aim. Therefore it was neglected, and the brunt of his attack fell on the Minister of State who, compelled anew to listen to the history of a policy for which he had promised so much and which now proved "so fecund in political and financial disasters,"¹⁹ appeared a broken warrior. His reply was marked with a loss of his exceptional mental resource and, correctly summarized by *L'Opinion Nationale* as little more than a desperate appeal to national sentiment on the thesis that the intentions of the Emperor with regard to Mexico, sincere from the start and envisaging only the glory of France, were falsified only by the fatalism of events.²⁰

The Majority which shared the Minister's embarrassment as it did his guilt applauded the feeble defense, and if its wonted applause offered him small comfort, his grief must have been well assuaged by the letter the Emperor addressed him after the debate. In this Napoleon adopted as his own all the Ministerial speeches, and announced, moreover, that he as the head of the Empire might send expeditions where he wished, and that his Ministers were but his mouthpiece to explain his conduct when he so wished. In closing he begged M. Rouher to forget "the vexations inseparable from the

me trouve pas dans la nécessité de vous faire observer que vous ne discutez plus sur le Mexique mais sur la Constitution." (*Ibid.*, p. 90.)

¹⁹ *L'Opinion Nationale*, 11 juillet, 1867.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

Ministerial office," and he bestowed on him as a mark of his approval the Grand Cross of the Legion in diamonds.²¹

This declaration of the doctrine of personal government at a time when tens of thousands of financial sufferers from his Mexican policy were yet nursing their losses and their wrath was hardly prudent. Nothing was better fitted to connect with emphasis the Mexican débâcle with this now very questionable theory and practice of government; and his political foes were not slow to make the most of it, as illustrated in the widely read "Fall of the Emperor Maximilian,"²² which appeared shortly after the Emperor's letter. The writer of this, in discussing what he terms the three superlative errors of Imperial policy; namely German unity, Italian unity, and the Mexican expedition, treats at length only the last. He finds some excuse for the first two but absolutely none for the last "the preeminent fruit of personal government," which he ponderously defines as

that combination of musings that takes place in a closet where the Sovereign abandons himself to his reveries, and of orders issued to Ministers, isolated in their obedience, who finally submit to the judgment of the nation the Imperial designs contemplated or irrevocably entered upon, and which serve only as a matter of grateful thanks or of patriotic regret.²³

The Emperor, notwithstanding his blustering letter, doubtless wished Mexico forgotten. The Speech²⁴ opening the session of 1867-1868, containing not a single reference to the past, would indicate this. But not so his opponents within the Corps; and during the new session these took advantage of everything to keep the memory of the débâcle alive. In January, for example, during the debates on the army increase requested by the Emperor they pointed anew to that disaster to warn the public of the danger to which France exposed herself in placing a larger army at the disposal of a Government, so easily tempted to distant expeditions. And

²¹ See *Le Moniteur*, 15 juillet, 1867.

²² E. de Kératry, *L'Empereur Maximilien, son élévation et sa chute*. This was a reprint of a series appearing in the *Revue Contemporaine*, July-August, 1867.

²³ Kératry, Preface.

²⁴ Delivered, November 18, 1867.

the interment at Vienna the 18th of the same month of the Mexican fiasco's most illustrious victim,²⁵ added a profound solemnity to the warning. Again, during the press debates of the following month and March, the gloomy adventure was used against the Government for its alleged shackling of the press during the Mexican war. This charge, as we have seen, was quite overdrawn, but exaggeration did not count with the Opposition, now willing to go much out of the way for damaging arguments on the score of the expedition. Press opponents, indeed, were willing to travel very far, making use even of a contemporary happening in distant Abyssinia.

In 1863 King Theodore of Abyssinia threw into prison two English missionaries for alleged disparagement of himself and his government. The London Missionary Society, whose representatives were the sufferers, on receiving word of the imprisonment lost little time in asking the English government to intervene, and Lord Russell, responding without delay, directed his consul-general at Alexandria to open communications with Magdala, the Abyssinian capital, for the liberation of the captives. But the year 1863 passed, and also the next without the liberation being effected. The latter year, indeed, found the list of English captives, among them the English envoy, raised to five; and the journal of the London Society, *Christian Work*, for December, 1864, contained the following criticism:

England has shown herself of late very weak in Europe, for which, however, she may be praised, as by her conduct in continental affairs she has prevented a general European war. But will she allow herself to be insulted by barbarous and uncivilized nations merely from

²⁵ The meditation this event inspired in La Gorce is worth repeating. "A Vienne," he writes, "le 18 janvier, 1868, le caveau des Capucins s'ouvrit, et enfin, dans la sépulture des ancêtres, la triste dépouille trouva le lieu de son repos. Pendant ce temps dans les jardins de Laeken, errait, en proie à la démence l'impératrice Charlotte, cette Ophélie qui attend son Shakespeare. Quant à Napoléon, quant à Bazaine, ils goûtaient les restes de leur prospérité, mais déjà étaient promis à une tragédie pire que celle qu'on vient de raconter. Vraiment, une sorte de malédiction agissant à la manière de l'antique destin, s'attachait à cette terre brûlante du Mexique. Et entre tous ceux qui figurèrent dans l'inexorable drame, qui oserait dire que Maximilien fut le plus malheureux?" (*Histoire du Second Empire*, tome v, p. 147.)

a motive of saving money rather than her honor? Will not only Europe but even the uncivilized nations say "The English lion has grown old and lost his powerful teeth?" England may be sure that she will lose the respect of the Eastern nations if she allows an unprincipled despot to ill-treat her own representative and subjects with impunity. Neither France nor Russia would endure such an insult.²⁶

Thus in 1864, if France had her "Mexican" England had her "Abyssinian" question.

Three solutions of this were offered Lord Russell without delay. The first of these was frigid. It was that the captives (the missionaries) should be left to their own fate "as they went to Abyssinia on their own accord, or at least with their eyes open."²⁷ The second was that an armed expedition should be immediately dispatched, and King Theodore promptly punished for his insult to English authority. The third also invoked military action, but this was not to be merely punitive. Abyssinia, said its proponents, is on the high road to the interior of Africa and occupies an important place on the shores of the Red Sea, and these things being so, they concluded, "the officers of the expedition might leisurely look about after they had accomplished their original task—in other words—they need not be in any haste to quit the country after they had taken it."²⁸

The British Government made its selection of one of these without haste, and at last in 1867 sent an expedition into Abyssinia under General Sir Robert Napier,²⁹ who speedily accomplished his orders. And these? Or rather, which of the two latter solutions was Lord Russell's choice? He had been closely watched by Europe which was now surprised³⁰ that his selection was the second and not the third.

²⁶ Quoted, *Abyssinia and Its People* (edited by John Camden Hotten), p. 276.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ The best unofficial account of this expedition is found in *Coomassie and Magdala, Two British Campaigns*, by Henry Morton Stanley, the only newspaper correspondent with the expedition, and who accompanied it as a preparation for his search for Livingstone.

³⁰ *L'Opinion Nationale* (29 avril, 1868), however, was not greatly so. "Cette indifférence pour la conquête, qui paraît tout d'abord surprenante, est inspirée aux Anglais par les dépenses et les ennuis incessantes que leur occasionnent les colonies depuis plusieurs années."

France was especially astonished at the unexpected issue, and the Liberal press there mingled its expressions of surprise with praise of the English government, while it made use of the Abyssinian expedition to recall, one time more, the disastrous one of Mexico. *Le Temps* observed: ³¹

The great renown that England enjoys in countries washed by the Indian Sea will not be in the least diminished by her resolution to withdraw from a country which is now at her mercy. . . . No further conquest is contemplated, for English statesmen know too well the state of public opinion in England to encumber themselves with further conquests, and, moreover, she has no influence to counterbalance in Abyssinia. She has no desire to place an emperor of her choice on the throne left vacant by Theodore.³² She has embraced the cause of no pretender, and will leave the Abyssinian people to organize themselves as they think best.

La France while commenting favorably on Napier's feat, replied to this. It said it found the successful English expedition "a convincing proof of the lofty patriotism which in England gives so much authority to political parties." *La France* bewailed the conduct of the Opposition in the Corps during the Mexican expedition, and contrasted it with that of the English House of Commons, "where parties may divide on questions of internal policy but when British diplomacy or British armies are at stake the sentiment of national honor predominates all divergent opinion."³³ The *Débats* quite disagreed with this utterance.

Instead of drawing the only conclusion the Abyssinian expedition allows the Government press make it the occasion of reading a lecture to the Opposition in the French Chamber. It has attributed the failure of the (Mexican) expedition partly to the conduct of the Opposition and to the encouragement given those who repudiated the authority of Maximilian, and it contrasts it with the patriotic support given the English Government in Parliament. The cause of the resistance was not the idea of exacting just reparation for the acts of the Mexican government of which French citizens were the victims, but the manner in which the expedition was carried on, which bears no resemblance to that which has just passed in England. The English Government simply announced its intention of penetrating into the heart of Abyssinia to chastize the barbarous despot, who had kept, in violation of the right of all nations, a certain number of British subjects in captivity. The object which it had proposed, being, once attained, it withdrew its army. Suppose on the other hand it had allowed itself to become the instrument of an intrigue planned by the enemies of King Theodore, and that it had ostenta-

³¹ Quoted without date, *London Times*, April 30, 1868.

³² Who committed suicide as Magdala fell.

³³ Quoted without date, *London Times*, April 30, 1868.

tiously announced its intention to aid the Abyssinians in establishing for themselves a regular government, interfering in the political quarrels between his subjects and King Theodore, proposing to regenerate the country and raise up in Abyssinia the influence of the Anglo-Saxon race, casting about for some unemployed archduke, conveying him to Magdala and securing for him the crown of Theodore by the votes of the Magdalan Notables, and suppose its encouraging English capitalists to subscribe to loans for the purpose of replenishing the coffers of the new Abyssinian monarch, how would the English Parliament and press receive a Minister who should propose and defend such a scheme? Whoever knows anything of England will not hesitate to say that he would have encountered the most strenuous opposition. The semi-official journals are imprudent in making comparisons which are not to their advantage and in reviving recollections which for our part we prefer to leave in oblivion.³⁴

The Imperialists, for their part, seemed not to wish this, and answered the comparison thru a less ephemeral medium than the daily press. In a current book defending the late expedition it was said that if Lord Napier had received honors in Parliament it was not due to anything in the Abyssinian expedition itself; "for," asserted the writer, "that expedition is to that of Mexico as I is to X, and France reaps from this every advantage both moral and material."³⁵ Bold assertion indeed! Yet nobody bothered, for the Abyssinian interest had suddenly fled, and with it the recrimination it had occasioned.

But the Mexican spectre was still far from being laid. In less than two months it arose again,³⁶ this time conjured up by the Mexican bondholders whose claims after more than a year's petitioning received due consideration. Compensation was made, but only after two hard fought conflicts. In one of these Jules Favre and Minister Rouher crossed swords for the last time on the Jecker bonds. The leader of the Opposition believed himself irresistible this time, munitioned

³⁴ Débats, April 30, 1868; quoted, London Times, May, 2, 1868.

³⁵ F. de La Barreyrie, *Révélation sur l'Intervention Française au Mexique de 1866-1867*, p. 54.

³⁶ These repeated resurrections one excellent commentator considered most salutary. "On ne nous y prendra plus à régénérer des empires, fussent-ils de race latine croisée de race azteque! C'est du moins ce qu'il est permis d'espérer, à voir les complications, les difficultés, toujours renaissantes qui empêchent cette malheureuse question mexicaine de jamais prendre fin." (*L'Opinion Nationale*, 26 juillet, 1868.)

as he was with Kératry's "Fall of the Emperor Maximilian", which he brought with him into the lists.⁸⁷ Written by Marshal Bazaine's aide-de-camp, "La Chute" was thought by some to be the "last word" on the expedition. That word, however, is never to be spoken about anything, and Favre learned that Rouher was as invincible as ever on the bond issue.⁸⁸

In the other battle the Minister did not do at all well, and it is hardly too much to say that he fell an easy victim to a less fiery veteran of the Corps whom I have had occasion to mention once before. This conqueror of Minister Rouher was Pierre Antoine Berryer.

Born two years before Louis XVI ascended the scaffold, Berryer was a young man of twenty-five when the Bourbons were restored. At forty he sadly witnessed their second fall and devoted himself to their second restoration. He worked expectantly till 1851, his sixty-first year, when all Legitimist aspiration dwindled into silent hostility to the Second Empire. He was a firm opponent of the Mexican policy of that Empire, altho only on one occasion did he register a vote against it. That was in 1864, when he acted in concert with its Radical opponents. After that, like Thiers, he abstained from voting again on the Mexican question. It was not that he had lost all interest in the expedition, for his speeches of July 22 and 23, 1868 show quite the contrary.

In these moderate speeches, made in behalf of the bond holders, Berryer made impossible the Minister's escape from the consequences of the bond propaganda of 1865 and the Corps, bowing to the inevitable, and accepted its share of responsibility by voting four million francs indemnity to the holders of the Mexican bonds.⁸⁹

Three months after this last act of the legislative session of 1868 there began that great political upheaval across the Pyrenees which, notwithstanding the Emperor's early resolves of non-intervention, was to terminate in the war that destroyed

⁸⁷ Ibid. (compte-rendu du Sénat et du Corps).

⁸⁸ Ibid., 28, 29 juillet, 1868.

⁸⁹ L'Opinion Nationale (compte-rendu), 28, 29 juillet, 1868.

his Empire. That supreme disaster it is needless to say took the Mexican business definitively out of politics and committed it solely to history. But once again before Bismarck shook the red shawl at the Gallic bull the opponents of personal government—for such the Opposition had now become—used the souvenir of the Mexican fiasco against the Empire. Nor was this last use unprovoked.

In his Speech ⁴⁰ opening the first session of 1869 and the last of the Corps elected in 1863, the Emperor made a confession of failure and issued a challenge. There can be no doubt that Mexico was in his mind when he said, "Certainly, Gentlemen, every government is subject to error, and fortune does not smile on every enterprise."⁴¹ The challenge came at the end, embodied in his announcement of the approaching general elections, when "the nation," he said, "convoked in its comitia will sanction the policy we have followed."⁴² The Orator showed himself eager for the electoral fray. But he was not more so than those to whom he especially and solely addressed this last notice.

On the evening of April 27, the Corps of 1863 passed into history. The week following, the elections were on, and for ten days the Imperialists and their opponents stormed the arrondissements and communes to capture the mass of the national suffrage. Paris and the larger cities quickly capitulated to the energetic assault of the Liberals, while the smaller towns and the rural communes "impervious to the subversive doctrines of the Radicals," fell as readily to the Imperialists.

The chief, and, in fact, the only plank of the Opposition of every shade called for the complete abolition of personal government; and the most formidable slogan toward that end brought back the painful souvenir of France's humiliation in Mexico. The speeches and circulars ⁴³ of the Opposition did not neglect, of course, the other "disgraceful results" of

⁴⁰ Delivered January 18, 1869.

⁴¹ *L'Opinion Nationale*, 19 janvier, 1869 (*Discours de l'Empereur*).

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Of both of which, numerous examples are found in *L'Opinion Nationale* 10-17 mai, 1869.

personal government—the disaster of Sadowa; the powerlessness of France in Europe; the lack of fixity in her foreign policy; her want of serious allies—all these received due attention. But the Mexican fiasco received the greatest stress; and no candidate for re-election, if he had the privilege, failed to inform his constituents that he had voted against the Mexican expedition.⁴⁴ Both the Emperor and his opponents therefore referred that matter to the opinion of the nation, thus making the Election of 1869, in part at least, a sort of “post mortem” national referendum on the Mexican policy of the Second Empire. And the result?

The Opposition did formidably well, polling at least three and a quarter million votes; but not well enough, for the Imperialist poll of 4,053,056⁴⁵ returned to the Corps 116 of the deputies who had voted for all the budgets and loans of the Mexican expedition, and all else that adventure entailed.⁴⁶ “The country,” said *L’Opinion Nationale*, deploring this result, “presents a strange spectacle; a mass that is counted by millions as indifferent to the subtle abstractions of parliaments, and as interested in the matter of ministerial responsibility, as it is in the *Glosses of Accorso* or in the *Summa of St. Thomas of Aquin*.”⁴⁷

The boast of the Emperor, therefore, was not an empty one. The mass of the nation, as he had promised, had put its stamp of approval on all his policies; and among these the Mexican expedition was not the least.

Little use after this for his opponents to keep alive the memory of that disaster. It had along with other things done great damage but not enough. As a political weapon it had proved not quite sharp enough, and time would not make it more keen. Instead it must grow dull and obsolete, and the foes of personal government must seek a better weapon if, indeed, one could be found, before the next election. Of this difficult search, however, they were spared; and by the very Emperor himself, in consequence of the catastrophe he brought upon his Empire July 12, 1870.

⁴⁴ See *ibid.*, 16 mai, 1869.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 31 mai, 1869.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 2 septembre, 1869.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Such were the circumstances in which the domestic conflict on Mexico finally ended. It is not necessary to recapitulate the events of that protracted political strife. Step by step we have studied its course, and at no point have we discovered the Opposition scoring a real success. It was an opposition futile throughout. It neither dissipated the idea nor prevented the realization of Maximilian's Empire; nor did it contribute to the abandonment of that Empire. Truly, an ungratifying conclusion; and in stating it I am well aware of its ill-agreement with the opinion of a frequently quoted scholar ⁴⁸ who names the domestic opposition, and especially the Corps' opposition to the Emperor's Mexican policy, among his four factors ⁴⁹ explaining France's abandonment of Maximilian.

But from that opinion ⁵⁰ the following facts, which the narrative has emphasized, compel courteous dissent. These are: I. the disappearance in the Corps, after 1864, and at the wish of the Emperor, of Conservative opposition to the Government's Mexican policy; II. the crushing defeats meted out to the Radical and the sole opponents of that policy during

⁴⁸ Clyde Augustus Duniway, "Reasons for the Withdrawal of the French from Mexico," in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1902*, I, 313-328.

⁴⁹ "No one will deny" he says, "that the consistent friendship of the United States for the republican government of Mexico contributed very materially to the downfall of Maximilian's Empire. Yet that catastrophe was plainly the product of more far-reaching influences than the policy of any single nation, and a proper account of it must include at least four main points, i. e., a statement of the actual conditions in Mexico, a recognition of the demands of French domestic politics, a consideration of the complications in European relations, a treatment of the attitude of the United States toward Napoleon's policy in Mexico." (*Ibid.*, pp. 317-318.)

⁵⁰ Which is based very largely on the *Memoirs of Randon, Vieil-Castel*, and others. Professor Duniway, to be sure, very frankly admits that these leave much to be desired; and well he might, for says the ablest, tho least appreciated, of modern critics, "*Memoirs do not supply the certainty of history. Certainty comes with the means of control and there is no controlling or testing memoirs without the contemporary documents.*" (*Lord Acton, Lectures on the French Revolution*, p. 360.) For my part, I have used the contemporary documents as the basis of my study, and in them have found no reason to accept the assertions of the memoirists. These it appears to me, are as little dependable as those of the Minister of State and the Emperor at length proved to be.

its critical years, 1865 and 1866. A few words on each of these.

I. There were, theoretically, three groups in the Corps during the late "sixties"; (1) an Imperialist marionette Majority above two-hundred strong; (2) a quasi-independent faction of thirty-one Conservatives whose instability merited them the title of "membres flottants"; (3) a group of grim and constant republicans, whose number until 1869 never exceeded sixteen. But practically, at least after 1864, and on the question of Mexico, there were but two groups in the Corps; namely, the Imperialist Majority, now swollen larger by the needless but virtually requested influx of the "membres flottants," and the numerically and generally negligible Radicals.

Professor Duniway overlooks this disappearance of the Conservative opposition during the critical years of the Mexican policy; and this is no slight oversight. He does not, however, neglect their rather vigorous 1864 protests,⁵¹ and the Ministerial responses to those protests,⁵² and so accords to an opposition, which ceased to be after 1864, a large share in an event whose genesis dates no earlier than 1866.

II. There existed, therefore, in the Corps, after 1864⁵³

⁵¹ Duniway, p. 322.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 322-323.

⁵³ This is readily observed in the following table, showing the distribution of the votes on the "Mexican Paragraph" of the Annual Address—a paragraph always written under the surveillance and to the satisfaction of the Government:

Paragraph	Number of deputies "for"	Number of deputies "against"
of 1862	242	7 (5 Radicals and 2 of undesignated party)
of 1863	245	5 (Radicals)
of 1864	201	47 (16 Radicals and 31 'membres flottants')
of 1865	231	17 (16 Radicals and 1 of undesignated party)
of 1866	226	16 (Radicals)

The Radicals, then, if one judge the position of the Corps by its suffrage (the proper criterion) and not by its oratory, formed the real "front" against the Mexican policy. The Imperialist Blanchot's

as in 1862 and 1863 but one opposition to Imperial Mexican policy worthy of the name, and of any laurels such opposition may merit. It was that led by Jules Fevre; namely, the Radical opposition, which neither deserved nor claimed any credit for the Emperor's abandonment of Maximilian. And, in fine, these might not lay claim to any credit for the abandonment of a policy which the more it was opposed the more the Emperor prosecuted it, and the more his Corps swamped opposition. And I may add that the Opposition in the press met with the same Imperial and Imperialist reaction.

These facts of the narrative would determine me, therefore, to seek an explanation for the Emperor's abandonment of his dearest foreign policy and the withdrawal of his army from Mexico in one or more of three other factors offered to explain those events; namely, the growing precariousness of the situation in Mexico; the European situation which demanded the presence of every French trooper; and the threatening insistence of the United States on the withdrawal of the French expeditionary forces from Mexico.⁵⁴ Altho it is

opinion of the effectiveness of these is mine also; "On peut supposer," he says, "que l'opposition qui, dans les Chambres françaises; s'acharnait contre ses (the Emperor's) vues sur le Mexique, ait pu exercer une puissante influence sur ses décisions. Mais alors, qu'étaient donc devenues en lui les aptitudes de 'l'Homme du Deux Décembre'? Il paraît cependant difficile d'admettre que les foudres de quelques beaux parleurs, fussent-ils du clan des opposants, aient pu exercer une telle pression sur ses déterminations et lui imposer ce brusque abandon d'une politique qu'il suivait depuis quatre ans." (Mémoires, III, 81.)

⁵⁴ I point out, in this final note, that the opinion of historians on the question of the withdrawal does not much incline in Professor Duniway's favor. Fifteen, at least, have treated of it since his paper was read. Twelve of these ignore entirely the action of the French Opposition. One of the twelve (Albert Thomas) considers European complications, the Mexican situation, and the pressure of the United States as the only factors of the withdrawal; two (La Gorce and Latané) find the first and last of these factors a sufficient explanation of that event; one other (Theo C. Smith) accredits it to Secretary Seward, aided materially by European complications, another (Gaulot) divides the honors between Mexican resistance and American pressure; three (Callahan, Howland, and Willis Fletcher Johnson) accredit the abandonment to Seward alone; and four (Dunning, Priestley, Schouler, and Westlake) seek no explanation beyond American pressure. But three important writers take Duniway's view on the French Opposition; Fish, Oberholtzer, and Rhodes.

this last mentioned factor which this study has incidentally stressed, it is not to be denied that the extraordinary sacrifices demanded by Maximilian's Empire, and grave complications on the Continent made it imperative to yield to American insistence. It might be interesting to speculate how much the one helped Secretary Seward win his debate with Foreign Minister de Lhuys, and how much the other speeded up the evacuation promised in consequence of that wrangle. Yet the study warrants no such speculations, but only the opinion already expressed; that, as far as the Mexican policy of the Second Empire was concerned, French domestic opposition of every sort was quite futile.

And so I close a story of failure. But it was a failure that did not, after all, much matter. The Opposition were, so to speak, like Slavata and Martinitz, thrown out of the window. But, again, like those two, whose names are inseparable from the Thirty Years' War, they triumphed thru others in the end. What the efforts of the French Opposition had proved most unequal to was accomplished, even terribly, at last. Yes, after years of conflict without issue, and in the day of defeat, they beheld, first, threats and dangers of war American or European, give France back her Mexican legions, and then the grim reality itself restore to France, in 1870, the liberty filched from her in 1851.

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